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ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

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JUDAISM

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Issue No. 163 / Volume 41 / Number 3 / Summer 1992

The First Reader R.B.W. 207

*Rabbinic Circles as Messianic Pathways in the
Post-Expulsion Era* ELISHEVA CARLEBACH 208

Can Sephardic Judaism Be Reconstructed? DANIEL J. ELAZAR 217

*The Jewish Profile of the Spanish-Portuguese
Community of London During the Seventeenth
Century* YOSEF KAPLAN 229

*The Final Disposition of the Synagogues and
Other Jewish Communal Property After the
Expulsion* JOSÉ LUIS LACAVE 241

*Jewish Christians and Christian Jews in Spain,
1492 and After* RICHARD H. POPKIN 248

*An Introduction to the Economic History of the
Iberian Diaspora in the Mediterranean* BENJAMIN RAVID 268

*Ethnic Rivalry or Melting Pot: The "Edot" in the
Roman Ghetto* KENNETH R. STOW 286

REVIEW

*Vilna on the Seine: Jewish Intellectuals in
France Since 1968*

by Judith Friedlander

MAUD S. MANDEL 297

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless — the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

The First Reader

Like the previous issue of Judaism (Spring 1992), this one, too, deals with the great turning-point event of the Expulsion from Spain in 1492 and the experiences of Jews in the various countries in which they were accepted thereafter. Some went to Erez Yisroel, while others made their way to North Africa, Western Europe and Turkey. We have, thus, in the following pages, a veritable kaleidoscope of history as Jews attempted once more to re-establish their lives and put down new roots.

The papers are by *Elisheva Carlebach, Daniel J. Elazar, Yosef Kaplan, José Luis Lacave, Richard H. Popkin, Benjamin Ravid* and *Kenneth R. Stow*.

R.B.W.

We deeply mourn the passing of

HARRY M. ORLINSKY,

a member of the Board of Contributing Editors

יהי זכרו ברוך

Rabbinic Circles as Messianic Pathways in the Post-Expulsion Era

ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

The scholars, the pious, and the men of deeds will come to live in the Land of Israel and settle in Jerusalem, each according to his ability . . . from the four corners of the world, one from a city, two from a family, to create a remembrance and loyal presence on the Holy Mount. When those pious settlers increase their prayers in . . . Jerusalem, the Creator will attend to their supplications and speed the redemption.¹

WHEN R. MEIR ALDABI WROTE THESE WORDS to introduce his vision of the messianic era, he could hardly have foreseen that they were to become a virtual manifesto, beginning in the sixteenth century, for countless circles of rabbinic scholars. Some of the most intense messianic spirituality was centered in the many *yeshivot* and study circles established in the period after the Expulsion for the express purpose of hastening the redemption. Of all the messianic pathways taken by Iberian Jews as a consequence of the persecutions and expulsions of the fifteenth century, this one has been least explored, although it lasted for centuries and spread beyond the Sephardic community.²

The structure of Sephardic higher *yeshivot* differed from that of Ashkenazim. The yeshiva, often called *hesger*, was a close knit circle of the scholarly elite, sometimes numbering about ten scholars.³ Sephardic rabbis often spurned official rabbinic positions for the greater opportunity of spiritual contact and prestige offered by serving as the head of a yeshiva. Unlike their Ashkenazic counterparts, they preferred leading *yeshivot* to other forms of spiritual leadership. A large community could sustain many such study-circles, and some functioned as rabbinical courts or

1. Meir Aldabi, *Shevelei Emunah [Paths of Faith]* ([c.p. Riva di Trento, 1518] Amsterdam, 1708), path 10, ch. 1, p. 124. Aldabi lived in the fourteenth century, and his messianic thought was nourished by that of Nachmanides.

2. On the spiritualization of politics in the post-exilic generation, see Rachel Elior, "Messianic Expectations and Spiritualization of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century," *Revue des Études Juives* (1986) 145:35-49; H.H. Ben-Sasson, "Exile and Redemption in the Eyes of Spanish Exiles," *Y.F. Baer Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 216-227.

3. For examples of the scholarly decade, see, for the circle of Isaac Luria, G. Scholem, "The Covenant of Unity among ARI's Disciples," (Heb.) *Zion* (1940) 5:133-160; for Luzzatto, see E. Carlebach, "Redemption and Persecution in the Eyes of R. Moses Hayim Luzzatto and his Circle," *PAAJR* (1987) 54:1-29; for Hayim Abulafia, see Yacov Barnai, *The Jews in Erez-Israel in the Eighteenth Century*, [Heb.] (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 41.

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served the community in other ways.⁴ The funds to support the scholarly-spiritual activities of the members came from private individuals who wished to participate in this redemptive activity, but who did not have the scholarly credentials or the personal inclination to do so. The size and closeness of the circles in this model lent themselves to specialized, sometimes esoteric purposes. At a time when world events seemed to bear portentous meaning for Israel's future, rabbinic leaders attempted to breathe new messianic meaning into these traditional forums of rabbinic scholarship. Rabbis founded academies, gathered students, and established special curricula of Torah study in their efforts to hasten the redemption and usher in the messianic era. R. Raphael Treves bluntly characterized this type of enterprise: "Our redemption . . . cannot be attained by the masses, only by the elite."⁵

There was no universal agreement among the study circles over the content or curriculum of a yeshiva dedicated to redemptive scholarship. The spread of Lurianic Kabbalah contributed to the vocabulary of redemption, and imbued the practice and study of Torah with a new theurgic spirit. Many believed that Kabbalah should be elevated to the center of the curriculum, with Talmudic texts relegated to peripheral status; for them, Kabbalah was the most profound level of Torah on an interpretive continuum.⁶ Others maintained that it was more important that the traditional curriculum be emphasized. The debate over the place of Kabbalah within the rabbinic academies raged from the early sixteenth century and continued well into the eighteenth.⁷

Sacred geography played a significant role in the configuration of redemptive *yeshivot*. While most centered on the Holy Land, others were situated so that the essential knowledge could first be disseminated throughout the diaspora.⁸ When Isaiah Hasid was forced to leave the yeshiva he had founded with Abraham Rovigo in Jerusalem, he founded

4. For *yeshivot* that served these functions, see H.Z. Dimitrovsky, "The Study House of R. Jacob Berab in Safed," [Heb] *Sefunot* (1963) 7:52-59; on the yeshiva of Jacob Hagiz, see E. Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy* (N.Y., 1990), pp. 62-63.

5. Barnai, p. 63. Similar schools, circles, and voluntary societies, whose structure and function parallel those we have described, flourished in medieval Islam and may have contributed to the genesis or continuity of this form among the Sephardim. Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam* (Leiden, 1986), p. 103 ff.

6. Moshe Idel, "Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah," G. Hartman and S. Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven, 1986), pp. 141-157. The notion of Kabbalah as antidote and antithesis to traditional Torah study appears to have developed later.

7. For the conflicting opinions of Jacob Zemah and Jacob Hagiz, see Carlebach, *Pursuit*, pp. 26-27; Isaiah Bassan and Moses Hayim Luzzatto, p. 209; for R. Hayim Vital, see Elior, p. 41.

8. Samuel de Medina and Mordechai Halevi championed the equivalent sanctity of diaspora communities. Carlebach, *Pursuit*, pp. 62-63; Carlebach, "Redemption and Persecution," pp. 19-20 for the diaspora-affirming view of Luzzatto.

one on exactly the same ten-scholar model in Manheim, where the circle's Sabbatian messianic goals became an open secret.⁹

Aldabi's ideal yeshiva in the Holy Land was comprised of scholars the world over, so that it would have the character of an ingathering of the exiles, as well as the authority of an international body. While we cannot overlook the changes wrought by the Ottoman conquest of 1516 that made mass immigration to the Land of Israel possible, they were not the cause of the movement but an enabling factor. The immigrants were motivated by a collective desire to use their Torah as a theurgic medium to end the exile.¹⁰

The ordination [*semikha*] controversy of the 1530s, in which the Jerusalem rabbinate opposed the attempt of R. Jacob Berab of Safed to restore apostolic ordination of rabbis, brought many aspects of this messianic vision to the public eye for the first time.¹¹ Despite its ultimate failure, it established the principle that a gathering of great scholars in a Sanhedrin-like body was a prerequisite for the redemption which could be initiated without any other confirmatory signs. Both sides in that controversy assumed that the Land of Israel was the only venue for such an undertaking. Yet, even in that instance, when so many conflicting motives interacted, one question could be reduced to purely geographic terms: Must the redemptive court originate in Jerusalem or could it be in Safed, which had many sources to back its claim as the center of redemption? For economic reasons, Safed predominated in the sixteenth century. It was only after it lost its economic base that it gave way to Jerusalem as the most important center for the redemptive circles.¹² Abraham Rovigo believed that in order to be effective as a redemptive lore, the true lore must be studied in the Land of Israel: "In the land of Israel they will be called learned of God; there, and not in the dispersion."

Jerusalem and Safed were not the only sites within the Holy Land to advance claims to being matrices of redemption. Tiberias, Hebron, and even Gaza were endowed with messianic significance. Tiberias was twice the site of redemptive attempts to rebuild and resettle it. The first, shortly

9. Jacob Mann, "The Settlement of the Kabbalist Abraham Rovigo and his Circle in Jerusalem in 1702," *Zion:Ma'asaf* (1935) 6:10. While Mann's study has been superseded in many ways, it contains valuable primary material.

10. See the increase in the messianic motif in letters from the Holy Land in A. Ya'ari, *Iggerot Erez Yisrael* (Tel Aviv, 1943) and esp. p. 163: "You have inquired whether there are [in Jerusalem] . . . yeshivot and scholars, and whether any new signs of the redemption have emerged."

11. Jacob Katz, "The Ordination Controversy Between Jacob Berab and Levi ibn Habib Over Renewing Ordination," *Zion* 16 (1951): 28-45, reprinted in *BINAH: Studies in Jewish History*, Vol. 1 (Prager, 1989), pp. 119-141.

12. For seventeenth century Jerusalem, see Meir Benayahu, "Toward a History of Study Halls in Seventeenth Century Jerusalem," (Heb.) *HUCA* (1948) 21, pp. 1-25; S.Z. Havelin, "Toward a History of Yeshivot and Sages in Jerusalem, 17-18th Centuries," (Heb.) *Shalem* (1976) 2:117-130.

after the Expulsion, was the attempt by the Nasi family. Originally, Doña Gracia obtained concessions in 1559-60 with the intention of founding a yeshiva there, followed by the more ambitious plan of her nephew, Don Joseph, Duke of Naxos, in 1562.

In the eighteenth century, the circle of R. Hayim b. Moses Abulafia [b. Hebron; c. 1660-1744] who studied in Jerusalem, under the tutelage of Jacob Hagiz and Moses Galante, founded a yeshiva in Tiberias called *Mashmi'a Yeshu'ah*, Harbinger of Redemption. Abulafia told the Jews of Tiberias "that the Messiah would soon arrive and come from the Sea of Galilee."¹³ Jacob Berab, a son-in-law of Abulafia, wrote an account of the miracles that occurred to the group to demonstrate its favor in the eyes of God as the beginning of the redemption. In one poem he wrote: "Surely the Sanhedrin will joyously return here; And from here, from Tiberias redemption will spring; . . . We will go up to Jerusalem from here, from Tiberias."¹⁴ The proofreader, Jacob Kastel-Franco, wrote of the Tiberias settlement:

Last of the ten stations of the Shekhinah which lies in the dust with us
 . . . From there it will proceed to Mt. Moriah with . . . King David. . . . As
 it states, "He was red-haired with good eyes and good looks." "Good eyes"
 — this is the Sanhedrin.

The arrival of Abulafia attracted many other scholars, including another Sephardic rabbinic titan, the saintly R. Hayim Benattar [1696-1743], author of the Biblical commentary, *Or Ha-Hayim*. Benattar went specifically to establish a yeshiva, to hasten the redemption. His meeting with Abulafia was itself viewed as an event suffused with messianic significance, although Abulafia could not persuade him to abandon his plan to go to Jerusalem. The yeshiva of Benattar emphasized the study of Kabbalah, although it was strongly anti-Sabbatian. According to some, it was the inspiration for the Hasidic model.¹⁵

Many diaspora communities maintained strong ties with the settlements in the Land of Israel, enabling those who went there — and chose to sacrifice their material security — to survive in the harsh economic climate of the Holy Land. The Jewish communities in the diaspora collected and allocated funds, hosted emissaries, made lists of potential candidates for immigration, rented ships, and often paid the fares of the poor. Sometimes the diaspora community was obliged to assume the entire financial responsibility for its "colony" in the Holy Land. In the eighteenth century, the fare was twice the annual income needed to live in the Land of Israel.

13. Barnai, p. 40.

14. On the revival of Tiberias by R. Hayim Abulafia's circle, see the account of his son-in-law, R. Jacob Berab, *Zimrat Ha-Arez*, ed. Meir Benayahu (Mantua, 1745; Jerusalem, 1946), p. 22. Kastel-Franco played an important role in the circle of Moses Hayim Luzzatto. The source for Tiberias as redemptive center is B. *Rosh Hashanah* 31b.

15. Marc D. Angel, *Voices in Exile: A Study in Sephardic Intellectual History* (Hoboken: KTAV, 1991), pp. 89-94.

Ships, each carrying 100-200 immigrants, left from Smyrna, Salonika, Livorno, Venice, and Amsterdam each summer. In the third decade of the eighteenth century, the Constantinople committee took over the administration of funds from that city to the Holy Land.¹⁶

The attempts to establish redemptive centers of rabbinic scholarship began with the first exiles, and continued for centuries. They tended to cluster around certain redemptive dates, such as 1575, 1700 — 1706, and 1740.¹⁷ The largest number of rabbinic redemptive confraternities were established in Jerusalem, with the other “Holy Cities” of Safed, Tiberias and Hebron attracting their share over the decades. Rabbinic circles were similarly established all over the Sephardic Diaspora, in Italy, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. While some were simply traditional centers of study, many had esoteric agendas which transformed their activities into intense theurgic dramas.¹⁸

The adoption by the Sabbatians of the rabbinic scholarly model as an essential messianic vehicle constitutes perhaps the greatest proof of its universal acceptance. Many prominent Sabbatians, some with messianic pretensions of their own, planned to build redemptive *yeshivot*. One of the most detailed plans for such an undertaking is that of the crypto-Sabbatian, Raphael Mordekhai Malkhi, who dedicated his career to making Jerusalem a stronghold for Sabbatian spirituality. At the core of Malkhi's vision stood a redemptive yeshiva:

At the end of days the Semites [Israelites] will seek Jerusalem . . . and from their lands they will establish a *midrash* [yeshiva] in Jerusalem of seventy scholars over them. The Lord will bring many settlers out of oppression who will cultivate the land and remain free of taxation because their brethren in the diaspora will accept the tax burden. They [the representatives of di-

16. Barnai, p. 23. For biographical information on many of the immigrants, see M.D. Gaon, *Yehudei HaMizrah be-Erez Yisrael*, I, (Jerusalem, 1928).

On the philanthropic ties between Israel and the Amsterdam community, see Gerhard Nahon, “Amsterdam and Jerusalem in the Eighteenth Century: The State of the Sources, and Some Questions,” in J. Michman, ed., *Dutch Jewish History*, II (Jerusalem, 1989). 17. On 1575, see D. Tamar, “The Anticipation for the Redemptive Year 1575 in Italy,” [Heb.] *Sefunot* (1958) 2:61 ff.; Scholem, “The Covenant,” Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel: From the First to the Seventeenth Centuries* (1927, repr. Gloucester, Mass., 1978), pp. 135-138. For 1700-1706, see Meir Benayahu, “The Holy Brotherhood of R. Judah Hasid and Their Settlement in Jerusalem,” [Heb.] *Sefunot*, 3-4 (1960); for 1740, see Isaac Cantarini, *Et Kez* (Amsterdam, 1710); Zalman Shazar, *The Messianic Hope for the Year 1740* [Heb.] (Jerusalem, 1970).

18. The number of study circles established in the period after the Expulsion was great; I shall make no attempt at an exhaustive list. For some illustrative examples, see, for Jerusalem, Shlomo Hazan, *HaMa'alot leShlomo* (Alexandria, 1894), pp. 103-104; for an extensive list of *yeshivot* founded in the Sephardic diaspora and a discussion of their role in the spiritual life of the diaspora communities, see Lea Bornstein-Makovetsky, “Structure, Organization and Spiritual Life of the Sephardi Communities in the Ottoman Empire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,” in R.D. Barnett and W.M. Schwab, eds. *The Sephardi Heritage*, II (Grendon: Gibraltar Books Ltd., 1989), esp. pp. 327-340; Silver, *Messianic Speculation*, p. 110.

aspora Jewry in Jerusalem] will be empowered to . . . defray most of the expenses either for taxes, or for sitting in the *Armon* [palace]. This *Armon* is the establishment of a headquarters for scholars as I have proposed. The era of this restoration [*takkanah*] is the time of the approach of the redemption . . . The King Messiah will emerge from them.¹⁹

Abraham Cardoso, one of the most important Sabbatian theologians, maintained close ties to Sabbatians in Jerusalem, where messianic activities intensified toward the end of the seventeenth century. The example of Cardoso is particularly telling, as he lived as a Marrano in Spain until his twentieth year, yet adopted this model for his messianic aspirations. He assigned copyists to disseminate his own treatises in Jerusalem to counteract the influence of other Sabbatian schools, and hoped to immigrate to Jerusalem to establish a yeshiva there. He said to his adherents:

In the Academy on High there are two *yeshivot*, one for Elijah and one for R. Simon bar Yohai. And I will establish a third one . . . for I possess a veritable treasury of esoteric lore.²⁰

Cardoso arrived in Jaffa in 1703 to actualize his plans, but the anti-Sabbatian rabbinate in Jerusalem barred his way. While his death in 1706 prevented him from fulfilling his intentions, his disciples, particularly Nehemiah Hayon, intensified their efforts to continue in his footsteps. In 1708, Hayon secured funding in Smyrna to establish a yeshiva in Israel, but it was similarly blocked.

One of the most intricate and elaborate ideological blueprints for the Sabbatian conception of the redemptive study circles can be found in the introduction to Mordekhai Ashkenazi's work at the time of the eighteenth century, *Eshel Abraham* [*Terebinth of Abraham*], so titled because of his close collaboration with Abraham Rovigo.²¹ Maintaining a sterling reputation as a traditional pietist, Rovigo believed that "The signs have now been revealed that this is the generation of the King Messiah."²² He saw himself as an epigone of Abraham the Patriarch, who would play a unique role in his generation, settling in the Holy Land to pave the way for the momentous future.²³ Although Rovigo had not yet succeeded in

19. Y. Rivlin, "The Proposal of R. Raphael Mordekhai Malkhi to Establish a Yeshiva in Jerusalem as a Center for Jewry," [Heb.] *Yerushalaim: Mehkarei Erez Yisrael*, (1955), 2/5:187-194, p. 46.

20. Elijah Kohen, *Sefer Meribat Kadesh*, in *Inyanei Shabtai Zevi*, A. Freimann ed. (Berlin, 1912), pp. 18-19.

21. Fürth, 1701. The author named on the title page is Mordekhai b. Judah Leib Ashkenazi, a disciple and amanuensis of Rovigo. On the title page he says that the book is named for Abraham Rovigo because most of its contents were Rovigo's. In his author's statement at the end of the book [p. 185a], Ashkenazi states more clearly that Rovigo is the book's author. Both the proofreaders and typesetters note on p. 186b that Rovigo is the real author. See also Scholem, *The Dreams of the Sabbatian Rabbi Mordekhai Ashkenazi*, [Heb.] (Jerusalem, 1938), pp. 18-19.

22. *Eshel Abraham*, p. 5b.

23. *Eshel Abraham*, p. 6a. In his eulogy for Rovigo, the Sabbatian Kabbalist, Benjamin Kohen of Reggio, also compared Rovigo to the patriarchal Abraham. *Gevul Binyamin*

immigrating at the time the book was published, he sent Ashkenazi “to oversee the establishment of a House of Study for him in Jerusalem . . . to study and to teach in the land which is sacred above all others.”²⁴ Much of the polemical activity in the Holy Land between Sabbatians and their opponents concerned control of the *yeshivot*, the most influential institutions in that society.²⁵

The curriculum proposed by the Sabbatians did not differ from that of many of their predecessors — they championed an almost exclusive reliance on kabbalistic texts, beginning with the Zohar, and particularly the study of Lurianic Kabbalah. What distinguished them was their strident insistence that any other pursuit of Torah studies was not only irrelevant, but actively impeded the redemption. The Introduction to *Eshel Abraham* began with a history of the chain of transmission of redemptive lore with the standard prototype of Moses at Sinai, in a way which set Kabbalah as a counterforce to traditional Torah study. The revelation of Moses at Sinai was not sufficient to create a permanent and perfect redemption out of the exodus from Egypt, which proceeded from the power of divine judgment. The redemption which would succeed the dissemination of the illuminating lore of R. Simon bar Yohai, author of the Zohar, would proceed from the powers of mercy; it would be permanent.²⁶

Eshel Abraham divided those who studied Torah into three categories. Those who read only the surface narratives of the Torah were regarded as “fools of the world” who judged a matter only by looking at its outer garment. Those who knew better, who studied “the principles of Torah,” were grasping the body beneath the garments.

But the wise servants of the Supernal King [the Kabbalists] penetrate to the soul, the absolute basis of the entire Torah . . . Because Israel did not engage itself in Kabbalistic lore, but only in *peshat*, there can be no redemption unless the matter is rectified.²⁷

This warning was repeated many times, using the standard Kabbalistic metaphors for the contrasting lores, such as the bark vs. the sap of a tree, and the Tree of Life vs. the Tree of Knowledge. “Woe unto those rabbis who eat of the husk of the Torah but don’t know its secrets.”²⁸ Ro-

(Amsterdam, 1727) I:217. On a kabbalistic typology of Abraham as most successful victor over the impure forces of exile, see M. Idel, Intro. to *Sefer Zafnat Pa’aneah of R. Joseph b. Moses Alashkar* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 46-49.

24. *Eshel Abraham*, p. 185 a. Rovigo’s circle ultimately included several members of the disbanded circle of Judah Hasid, including his son-in-law, Isaiah Hasid. The total number of members was always ten.

25. For a more complete history of these controversies, see Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy*, (N.Y., 1990).

26. *Eshel Abraham*, p. 3a. It is noteworthy that Rovigo/Ashkenazi characterized the weaker redemption of Moses as powered by the force of prophecy [*labat esh de-nebuah*], while the final redemption through bar Yohai’s lore was characterized as powered by Torah [*labat esh de-Oraita*], p. 4b. Cf. Luzzatto who reversed the hierarchy. (Carlebach, *Pursuit of Heresy*, p. 209).

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 3a-3b.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 5a.

vigo cautioned that “those who study anything other than the true lore are actively impeding the cosmic union which must precede the redemption.”²⁹

Sabbatians rejected *veritas* as an end in itself, if it did not further the semi-magical goal of their studies. They rejected the traditional warnings that study of Kabbalah can lead to harm in the wrong hands.

A person should not say that the Kabbalistic lore is so elevated and lofty that it could bring one to stumble. That is no reason to relinquish it, because love covers all sins, and error is pleasurable to God.

They sanctified even their errors, and approved practitioners even if they were not technically qualified.

Even if a passage seems difficult to understand, one must nevertheless persist, and be certain that one will ultimately understand everything . . . if only one studies with the proper intent.³⁰

One apparent exception to the rule that Sabbatians tended to favor exclusively study of Kabbalah over the traditional texts is R. Moses Shalit, a follower of the Sabbatian circle of R. Judah Hasid. In his confessional introduction to *Berit Matteh Moshe*, Shalit wrote:

When I joined the Holy Society of the great master Judah Segal [Hasid] I deeply regretted that I expended so much energy [on the homiletic material in the book] . . . I should have filled myself with Talmud and codes . . . and not wasted time with homily, as there has already been a warning [from/to] R. Judah and his group.” [The Hebrew text is ambiguous].³¹

* * *

Modern historiography has imposed such a rigid construction of the categories of messianism and rabbinism that the significance of messianism as a central and fundamental response to the Expulsion remains unremarked. *Wissenschaft* scholars viewed messianism as an outgrowth of rabbinic obscurantism, part of the tragic complex of the effects of the diaspora on medieval Jewish character. Modern reappraisals celebrated messianism for its liberating power while separating it from rabbinism, which it portrays as its opposing conservative force. This formulation informed the construction of Gershom Scholem, and resonated throughout his influential works in many ways. In his view, rabbis could accommodate messianism only so long as it remained in the extremely distant future:

As long as messianism appeared only as an abstract hope, as an element totally deferred to the future which had no living significance for the life of the Jew in the present, *the opposition between the essentially conservative rabbinic and the never completely defined Messianic authority*, which was to be established from entirely new dimensions of the utopian, could remain without

29. Ibid., p. 6a and *passim*.

30. Ibid., p. 3a. For a similar attitude in Hayon, see Carlebach, *Pursuit of Heresy*, p. 101.

31. Berlin, 1701. Benayahu, “The Holy Brotherhood,” pp. 143-146, cites this passage as evidence that some scholars within Sabbatian circles urged the exclusive study of classical rabbinic texts. Most of the circles, including Rovigo’s, allotted some time for the traditional texts.

real tension; . . . But whenever there was an actual eruption of such hope, that is to say, in every historical hour in which the messianic idea entered the mind as a power with direct influence, the tension which exists between these two forms of authority immediately became noticeable. These things could be united in pure thought, or at least they could be preserved next to one another, *but they could not be united in their execution*.³² [my emphasis]

In his classical essay on the messianic postures of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewries, Gerson D. Cohen formulated this thesis in an equally sharp manner:

At best, the rabbis tolerated the yen of some Jews to settle in the Holy Land, but the extremely restricted extent of such settlement betrays the true nature of the elitist-rabbinic messianic posture . . . We shall see that while later rabbinic authorities of Europe played several variations on this theme, their policy and programs were basically identical with that of the elitist elements of Palestine and Babylonia.³³

The imposition of a strictly antithetical relationship between rabbinism and messianism has prevented us from seeing that some of the most creative messianic responses to the Expulsion bore the impress of the very core of rabbinic life.³⁴ The study circles transformed individual initiatives to conquer the "sea of Torah" and attain individual heights of spiritual perfection, into an urgent effort to achieve collective redemption. These vehicles of rabbinic messianism preceded the Sabbatian movement, influenced its adherents, and outlived its last vestiges. Halakhists and Kabbalists, in the dispersion and in the Holy Land, within the Sephardic diaspora and beyond it, shared the belief that the world was created and sustained only for the sake of Torah, and only through Torah could it be redeemed.

32. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (NY: Schocken, 1971), pp. 21-22.

33. Gerson D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim (Prior to Sabbethai Zevi)," Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture #9 (NY, 1967), p. 5. An extreme application of this dichotomous view of rabbinism and messianism is to be found in Lionel Kochan's recent book, *Jews, Idols, and Messiahs: The Challenge from History* (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1990), which posits a fundamental tension between Jewish communities governed by the laws of Judaism and those governed by the messianic idea.

34. The grand exception to this thesis can be found in the pioneering oeuvre of Moshe Idel, who has taken the commandments as an example of Scholem's misreading of rabbinic Judaism. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 156-166. In the post-expulsion period, a similar theurgic/redemptive model can be applied to the study of Torah.

Can Sephardic Judaism Be Reconstructed?

DANIEL J. ELAZAR

After a Thousand Years, New Divisions?

FOR ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS, THE PRINCIPAL division in world Jewry was between Ashkenazim, the Jews who lived north of the Alps in lands predominantly Christian, and the Sephardim, Jews who lived south of the Alps in lands predominantly Muslim. That division is disappearing as such because both populations have ceased to live in their original regions. As the dust of the great migrations has settled, the majority of the Sephardim are to be found in Israel or France, where they have formed local majorities, while the majority of the Ashkenazim live in the United States and Eastern Europe, where they also form local majorities. Even in those cases, however, what survives from their respective Jewish subcultures is, for most, merely fragmentary cultural baggage with little meaning beyond the reality that everyone carries such baggage which influences behavior and attitudes, even when people are unaware that it does, without necessarily being a conscious creative force.

The only sector of the Jewish world in which those two traditions remain consciously creative forces as such is in the religious one, particularly among its Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox segments. There, a combination of factors has given the Ashkenazim almost an iron grip, which only serves to increase the gap between the most energetic Jewish religious movements and the lives of most Jews, and to weaken the relationship of Jews with the rest of the world. That, indeed, is their intent. What is missing from the Jewish religious picture is an active, articulate expression of the Sephardic way — classic rather than romantic, Mediterranean rather than Eastern European, cosmopolitan rather than parochial — that has as its goal the linkage of all of this through a common religious framework and the involvement of Jews in the world without sacrificing their Jewishness.

The Break-Up of the Traditional Sephardic World

After 1492, the Iberian exiles formed two new concentrations. One was in North Africa, where they found a very large indigenous Jewish population. There they formed a separate minority, an elite group that preserved its own culture and a form of Judeo-Spanish known as *Hakatia*.

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Maintaining close connections with their brethren elsewhere in the Mediterranean, their numbers were periodically reinforced from other parts of the Sephardic world, just as they also migrated elsewhere in response to opportunity. It was only in the modern epoch that the Sephardic *Me-gurashim* (exiles — as they were known in several parts of North Africa) really integrated among the indigenous *Mustarabim* (Jews of Arabic culture — as they were frequently known). Still, in the inevitable interaction and interlinkage that developed over the centuries, the indigenous population proved to be stronger, if only by sheer numbers, and, despite the very strong Sephardic intellectual and religious influences that were incorporated locally and the persistence in power of a communal and religious elite of Iberian ancestry, only a limited separate *Spaniol* culture developed.

This was not the case in the other concentration, in the Balkans and the Eastern Ottoman Empire. There the exiles came in such numbers that they overwhelmed the indigenous Jewish population and forced the latter to assimilate into a Judeo-Spanish cultural matrix that encompassed every aspect of life — from language, foods and music to the highest religious, cultural and intellectual expressions of civilization. It was there that the Hispanic Sephardim, the *Spaniolim*, had their Silver Age, which flourished as long as the Ottoman Empire flourished and declined as that empire declined.

Two other smaller but vital concentrations of Sephardic Jewry were formed in the wake of exile. One was in Italy where, influenced by the Italian Renaissance, there was produced a particularly sophisticated and cosmopolitan expression of Sephardic Jewish civilization. The second was in *Erez Yisroel*, centered around Safed, where new heights were reached in Sephardic religious expression in the century after the Expulsion.

With the decline of the Mediterranean world, as a result of that other great event of 1492, the European discovery of America, those Sephardic centers entered into periods of decline, one by one, until they were destroyed, although they never lost all of their creativity. Indeed, the advent of modernization led to new bursts of creativity in all of them. Thus, for example, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the same period when a secular Yiddish literature and culture flourished in Eastern Europe, a secular Ladino literature and culture flourished in the Balkans. As Zionism began to capture the imagination of the Jewish people, and Zionist societies in Eastern Europe began to think of sending colonists to “Palestine,” the Jews of Safed took the initiative in the establishment of the first Galilee “colonies” in the 1880s and 1890s, just as the Sephardic Jews of Jerusalem and Jaffa began an urban-suburban Jewish renaissance in the 1850s and 1860s. The predominantly Sephardic Jewish community of Bulgaria was the first in the world to become officially Zionist.

A century after the Expulsion, Sephardic communities developed in northwestern Europe, many founded by ex-Marranos. They pioneered

the way west for all of Jewry, and formed a distinctive western Sephardic subculture of their own. In Amsterdam, London, Antwerp, and Hamburg they established an elegant and justly celebrated synthesis between tradition and modernity that soon spread to the New World.

On the other hand, as modernization engulfed them, the Jewish religious leadership in Central and Eastern Europe became either more radical or more conservative in their approach to tradition, either seeking antinomian radical reform or refusing to countenance any new departures, even in interpretation. The religious leadership of the Sephardic world, on the other hand, particularly in North America and the Balkans, developed a whole pattern of halakhic interpretation that moved far in the direction of reconciling halakhah with modern technology and life down through the nineteenth century.

The breakdown of those traditional Sephardic centers came at the end of the nineteenth century, approximately a generation behind the breakdown of traditional Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and for much the same reasons. The backwardness of the host regimes, the grinding poverty of the Jews who had to find some way to survive, coupled with the opening of opportunities in the New World, led to an increasing flow of emigrants outward from those traditional areas, while those who stayed behind were caught in the Holocaust which destroyed Balkan Jewry and even reached into the Jewish community of Tunisia. The reestablishment of the State of Israel effectively completed the removal of what the Holocaust left behind. By the early 1960s the traditional Sephardic world had disappeared, surviving only in the memories of the older generation, most of whom had remained alive by emigrating from their places of origin.

These events led to the end of *Judesmo* culture (the Judeo-Spanish language of the Sephardim, sometimes called Ladino or Spaniolit) even in its secular form. Not that the talents disappeared. A.B. Yehoshua, the product of an old Ladino-speaking Jerusalem family, became the leading Israeli novelist of the post-Six Day War era. He, of course, wrote in Hebrew, but not until the late 1980s did he even begin to address his Sephardic roots. Elias Canetti won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1981. Raised in a *Judesmo*-speaking family in Bulgaria, he adopted German as his literary language. What was true of these greats was equally true of lesser literary lights, most of whom wrote in Hebrew because they lived in Israel, while those who lived in the diaspora wrote in their local vernacular. Other creative Sephardim in the arts and in music became part of the cosmopolitan modern and postmodern worlds, preserving little or no Sephardic distinctiveness. Murray Perahia, himself from a *Judesmo*-speaking family, is no more a Sephardic concert pianist than Daniel Barenboim is an Ashkenazic one. Nor is there any reason for either to be. The most one could say is that Perahia's performances show echoes of the classical Sephardic mode, and, hence, he is the better performer of Mozart, while Baren-

boim, who is a reflection of the Ashkenazic romantic mode, is better at performing Beethoven.

Classic Sephardic Judaism

One of the greatest, if not the greatest, contribution of Sephardic Jewry was its approach to the theory and practice of Judaism. Iberian Jewry reworked the Jewish materials it inherited from *Erez Yisroel*, Babylonia and North Africa into classical forms. Thought, whether in halakhah, philosophy or mysticism, was organized systematically to offer a balanced theory and practice, not given to excess, always seriously Jewish, yet worldly and cosmopolitan. Classic Sephardic Judaism was designed by men who lived in the larger world and were active in its affairs. Most of them wanted a Judaism no less rigorous than that of their Ashkenazi brethren in its essentials, but more flexible in its interpretations and applications. Their Judaism would have an isolating function only where critically necessary, and did not prevent them from playing their role just as they had done prior to 1391 in the multi-religious society of Spain.

Sephardic Judaism as it developed in Spain was not, like the “post-Reformation” Judaism of modern Europe and the United States, divided into Reform, Conservative or Orthodox. First of all, it did not involve the kind of rupture with tradition that characterized Reform. Nor did it turn tradition into something frozen, or worse, reshaped by a deliberate ideology of rigidity, as did ultra-Orthodoxy. Nor did it allow the kind of institutional divisions that ultimately led to more deep-seated ruptures, as with Conservatism. In part, this was because medieval conditions were different from modern ones, and, in part, because the culture of the Mediterranean world is different from that of northern Europe.

Since the medieval world did not permit a secular option, each religious community was also, to a greater or lesser extent, a political and social one and everyone had to adhere to one religious community or another. This meant that all but the most alienated elements stayed within the Jewish fold. Otherwise, they would have had to convert to Christianity or Islam. (Some did, and posed problems for the Jews, but most did not.) Since that was the case, people who took more moderate or cosmopolitan positions on matters Jewish had to find their way within the community, and, in many cases, had the status and voice which enabled them to do so. The secular option, which came into existence in the modern world, whereby civil society could be neutral in matters of religion (which, as a result, became a matter of voluntary allegiance), offered an opening for people who wanted a chance to develop their own brands of Judaism and to institutionalize them.

Even more than that, the fact of Sephardic Jewry being Mediterranean played a very important role. Thus, we see today that, in the Mediterranean countries, the Protestant approach to religion, with its search

for consistency between belief and action, continues to do poorly. As a rule, Mediterranean peoples believe that they must formally be faithful to the traditions of their fathers, although reserving to themselves the right to determine how they individually will maintain those traditions. In contemporary time, this has become the way in which many Sephardim conduct their lives. Today, there are more than a few Sephardim who eat every kind of halakhic abomination while providing support for the most ultra-Orthodox Sephardic *yeshivot* (rather than more “modern” institutions), and who regularly visit (with checkbook in hand) wonder-working rabbis of the old school to obtain their blessings.

This is an extreme expression of this “Mediterranean” phenomenon, and one should note that it was not the way of classic Sephardic Judaism. People might be more or less observant, but the differences were infinitesimal compared to the present times. The *poskim* (rabbinic decisors) were still followed, but the *poskim* themselves were men of the world whose decisions reflected both their piety and their worldliness.

The Sephardic world produced a complete literature, from works of speculative thought to halakhic decisions that built, re-enforced, and remodeled this religious edifice as necessary. They took it with them upon their exile from the Iberian Peninsula and maintained it intact until the twentieth century when the tides of modernity completely engulfed the Sephardic world. The basic element of the Sephardic religious outlook, embodied in the halakhic decision-making of its religious leadership, was that halakhah should facilitate Jewish living in the world in which Jews found themselves, not seek to separate them from the external world *per se*. This approach dominated Sephardic halakhic decision-making well into the twentieth century, until the death, in 1953, of the Rishon Le-Zion, Israel’s Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Ben Zion Hai Uziel. By that time, however, the Sephardic rabbinate was well on its way toward Ashkenazification, the result of a combination of factors that have proved nearly fatal to the Sephardic way.

The Impact of Shifting Demographics

The first of these factors is sheer demography. At the end of the eleventh century, perhaps a hundred years after the emergence of a division between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewry and their two approaches to halakhah, 97 percent of world Jewry could properly be dominated Sephardic, with only 3 percent Ashkenazic, the latter concentrated in a little area in northern France and western Germany. While the Ashkenazic population continued to grow over the following centuries, at the beginning of the modern epoch, the mid-seventeenth century, Sephardim still outnumbered Ashkenazim three to two. However, early in the eighteenth century the two groups became equal in number and, by the end of the eighteenth century Ashkenazim outnumbered Sephardim three to two,

the result of improved living conditions in Christian Europe, as against the Muslim world.

During the nineteenth century these improvements led to a population explosion among Ashkenazic Jewry which was paralleled in the Sephardic world only at the very end of the century. The Ashkenazic high point came in 1931 when they constituted nearly 92 percent of world Jewry. Then, as a result of rapid population growth in North Africa and West Asia, the percentage of Sephardim began to grow even before the Holocaust. That tragedy, which witnessed the murder of Jews caught in it, without reference to their being Ashkenazi or Sephardi, still affected the Ashkenazi world more than the Sephardi. The Sephardim have continued to gain in numbers and in percentage since 1939, and today constitute approximately twenty percent of world Jewry. Still, the four to one advantage of the Ashkenazim gives them a sheer numerical advantage that cannot be minimized.

It means that, even to the degree that the major Sephardic and Ashkenazic centers suffered in the same proportion from the catastrophes of the twentieth century, so many more Ashkenazim were able to survive, with their religious leadership and institutions intact. This also had to do with the conditions under which they survived. For example, almost the only Ashkenazi religious institutions that actually survived World War II were *haredi yeshivot* which, through bribery and cunning, managed to escape the Nazi (and, for that matter, Soviet) clutches. More modernized Jews had too much faith in the enlightenment of modern man to resort to those methods and, hence, perished.

Meanwhile, in the new world, new institutions had been developed in the Ashkenazi spirit by Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. Among Sephardim, the old country institutions were actually destroyed as a result of *aliyah* to Israel — in many cases, out of love, as it were, by the representatives of the Zionist movement, who saw no value in the older religious way of life. They sought to create a new Israeli man by forcing the *olim* to abandon not only their institutions but their Torah scrolls and sacred manuscripts when they left their countries of origin. Once the *olim* had arrived, it was easy to discredit the authority of old-country elders. Thus, institutionally, the Ashkenazim, whether *haredim* or reformers, were in a better position to dominate religious life after World War II. Neither followed the spirit of the Sephardic way, which provided for moderation without institutionalizing either Orthodoxy or secularism.

Institutions as Factors

The institutional factor was critical here. In the course of 200 years, the Ashkenazim had adapted institutionally to modernity in their religious life. Both *hasidism* and *yeshivot* were religious Jewish responses to the eighteenth century; they were strengthened and expanded as Orthodox

or ultra-Orthodox institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which effectively seized control of the definition of what constituted traditional Judaism. In the nineteenth century, ideologically reforming movements — Reform and Conservative — appeared among the Ashkenazim of the West, who deliberately sought to create new forms of Judaism. Technically speaking, Conservative Judaism did not, seeking to reanimate what they saw as the flexibility and changing character of tradition; that is why, in the early days of the Conservative movement, Sephardim were very prominent in it, dropping out only when the movement took on separate institutional and ideological form.

As religious institutions ceased to be unifying factors in Jewish life, the Ashkenazim developed civil institutions to perform shared or common functions, providing interaction in the Zionist movement, and serving as the national representative or as representative in community relations organizations, or local community federations.

The Sephardim, on the other hand, underwent no such institutional development. They tried to retain their traditional institutions, congregations and communities, yet were unable to adapt them except where they imitated Ashkenazi models. In the few places where Sephardic majorities remained after the great migrations, as in Morocco, or were established as a result of migrations, as in France, the older institutions that adapted slightly continued to exist. These were, mostly, congregations which remained localistic, serving the immediately private needs of individual families, and were not able to go beyond that. In France, indeed, the national institutions had been established earlier by Ashkenazim and were simply taken over, in due course, by Sephardim.

In most places, however, the Sephardim did not have a majority. Therefore, they retreated to their own congregations or joined with the Ashkenazim in their institutions. Since, in any case, like Ashkenazim, Sephardim underwent a crisis of religious belief and practice and most no longer remained faithful to tradition, the impact of these congregational and religious institutions was necessarily weakened. This was especially true of the religious institutions. In their own way the Ashkenazim, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, early on attempted to develop new institutions of higher Jewish learning to cope with the demands of modernity. Of them, the *yeshivah* is the most successful for the Orthodox, while the rabbinical seminary, with a strong Jewish studies component, following the *Wissenschaft* model, served the same purpose for the non-Orthodox.

The Sephardim were not successful in developing either, although there were attempts. The *yeshivah*, with its isolationist orientation, was foreign to the Sephardic tradition, while the rabbinical seminary involved too sharp a break with traditional institutions. The Sephardic *Talmud Torah*, which had played an equivalent function in traditional Sephardic society, either was not able to redefine itself or failed to attract the students that it needed to survive, as most Sephardim (like most Ashkenazim, for that

matter) ceased to be interested in higher Jewish studies. Ironically, most of those who were, were products of Ashkenazification and were attracted by the fundamentalism offered by the *yeshivah* world rather than by the moderate openness of Sephardic institutions. Thus, in time, most of those Sephardic youth who wanted traditional learning either went to Ashkenazi *yeshivot* or Sephardic *yeshivot* modelled after the Ashkenazi pattern, and accepted Ashkenazi ways in everything except, perhaps, the *minhag tefilah* (prayer ritual).

Where their culture remained intact, Sephardim developed exemplary educational systems from bottom to top, whether in Amsterdam or in Salonika (to give two prominent examples). However, nowhere in the twentieth century Sephardic dispersion did Sephardim form their own higher *yeshivot*, in most cases because they were not present in sufficient numbers. At most, they found a sub-program for them within an Ashkenazi *yeshivah*, but that itself was often established by Ashkenazim. Only in *Erez Yisroel* did they have the numbers to do so, and there the Sephardim who had the wherewithal did not have the interest, while the ones who had the interest were attracted to Ashkenazi *yeshivot* or Sephardic copies of same. This trend was strengthened by the fact that the Sephardic way had been dominated by *Spaniolim*, those Jews descended from the exiles from Spain and Portugal, and who, as a group, early abandoned a firm commitment to tradition in favor of modernization. Those interested in traditional learning increasingly came from the Jews of Asian and African countries, the so called *edot hamizrah* who, while within the Sephardic cultural and religious spheres, were most disrupted in their high culture by their migrations, and apparently lost the intellectual drive to produce their own institutions during the critical transition.

Since the Ashkenazim had begun developing their institutions in *Erez Yisroel* before 1860, while living in the midst of a Sephardic majority, their models were firmly implanted by the time the Sephardim began building their own institutions. The major Sephardic example of higher Jewish learning in Israel, *Yeshivat Porat Yosef*, became the first of a long series of replicas of Ashkenazi *yeshivot*. On the other hand, the *Beit Yetomim HaSepharadi* (the Sephardic orphanage) founded by Sephardim in Jerusalem in 1895 in the traditional Sephardic mold, and whose charter provided, and continues to provide for, a rabbinical training curriculum that includes secular studies, failed to attract significant leadership or student body, perhaps because in its early days it was based on the hidden assumption that only orphans who had no other way to make a living would go into the rabbinate in modern times. That meant that non-orphans were not attracted, and the orphans wanted to get out.

The earlier *Talmud Torah* of the *Vaad Ha-Edah HaSepharadi b'Yerushalayim* (Central Committee of Sephardic Jews of Jerusalem), the governing body of the Jewish community of that city from time immemorial (it claims to have been founded by Nahmanides when he re-established Jew-

ish community life in the city in 1268), also failed in the early days of the Zionist *Yishuv*, probably for similar reasons. There no longer were enough Sephardic young people interested in the traditional rabbinate in the new world emerging under Zionism. Between World War I and the mid-1970s, from time to time, the *Vaad HaEdah* tried to establish rabbinical training programs of similar character, but failed because of the opposition of the Ashkenazi establishment.

The Ashkenazification of the Sephardim

The death of Rabbi Uziel marked the final takeover of power from the Sephardim by the Ashkenazi rabbinical establishment. The establishment of the office of Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi in *Erez Yisroel* in the 1920s was the beginning of that takeover. Until then there had been only one Chief Rabbi, the Rishon Le-Zion, chosen by the Sephardic community. The Ashkenazim had their individual *kollelim* and *batei din* (rabbinical courts), all what we would now call *haredi* in character. The Zionist movement, religious and non-religious, wanted to introduce a more Zionist rabbinate, and the British were not adverse to assisting them. Hence, the establishment of the dual Chief Rabbinate, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, in 1921.

In violation of the halakhah that Sephardi custom was to predominate in *Erez Yisroel*, which dates at least from the Middle Ages, the Ashkenazi rabbinical leadership insisted that, as the new majority, Ashkenazim could bring in and maintain their own customs (*minhagim*). Ashkenazi *haredim* went even further, to insist that every person had to follow the customs of the community from which his family came in Eastern Europe, down to the smallest matters of pronunciation.

Given the numbers and power of the Ashkenazim, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbinate soon became more powerful than the Sephardi. Ashkenazim came to dominate the institutions of the Chief Rabbinate, country-wide and local. Moreover, they were convinced that their way was the correct one, and, hence, they made a deliberate effort to overwhelm the Sephardim, whose ways were strange and, in their eyes, not sufficiently rigorous.

The Sephardim, in turn, fell victim to their own internal divisions. The Sephardic Chief Rabbinate had been the preserve of the *Spaniolim* — who, by the early 1950s, were thoroughly outnumbered by Asian and African *olim*. In the struggle over who would succeed Rabbi Uziel (appointed by an electoral college, designated by the Knesset, consisting of Ashkenazim and Sephardim), the Ashkenazi rabbinical establishment threw its backing behind Rabbi Yizhak Nissim, of Iraqi origin, who was opposed by the *Spaniol* establishment. Rabbi Nissim won, with Ashkenazi votes, which put the Sephardic Chief Rabbinate in a clearly subordinate position, *de facto*, to the Ashkenazim. It remains in this position to this day,

although one of the selling points of Shas, the Sephardic Torah Guardians, and its spiritual mentor, former Rishon Le-Zion, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who is recognized as one of the great *poskim* of our day by Ashkenazim and Sephardim alike, was that the Sephardim had to take back their rightful position.

Unfortunately, Rabbi Yosef and his colleagues had themselves become so Ashkenazified through their education in Ashkenazi or Ashkenazified *yeshivot* that, while they, in fact, regained some power, they did not offer very much of an alternative. Rabbi Yosef, also of Iraqi background (since the election of Rabbi Nissim, all the Sephardic Chief Rabbis have been of Iraqi background), feeling the pressure of the Ashkenazi *yeshivah* heads, consistently refused to provide support to the Sephardic community's efforts to establish more open *yeshivot* in the 1960s and 1970s.

The few isolated exemplars of the old Sephardic tradition, men like the Sephardic Chief Rabbis of Tel Aviv, Haim David HaLevy (the author of an excellent and widely-adopted contemporary abridgment of the *Shulḥan Arukh* for popular use, and once one of the most popular rabbis in Israel until he was more or less silenced under pressure), and of Netanya, Rabbi David Celouche, are under constant pressure to conform to the Ashkenazified ways and the Ashkenazi approach. Even they must dress in the Ashkenazi rabbinical style, so thoroughly Eastern European in its origins. The authentic costume of the Sephardic Rabbinate has been given up except in the case of the Rishon Le-Zion, who wears traditional garb on state occasions.

Ashkenazified Sephardic *yeshivot* teach the rabbinical stories of Eastern Europe to their students, so that a Sephardi rabbi, speaking to Sephardic Jews, will tell stories of the hasidic masters because he will not know the many excellent and beautiful stories of his own tradition. The popular religious music of the Ashkenazim is now widely used by Sephardim on festive occasions such as weddings, bar mizvahs and even in Sephardic religious services at certain points, because that is what the people learn in school and what is familiar to them. Sephardic religious music is hardly ever taught, and even Sephardic customs are taught as exotica or folklore rather than as part of a living tradition.

Sephardim and Ashkenazim

The only difference preserved by these Ashkenazified Sephardic religious leaders is that almost all see themselves as *mekarvim* (those who try to bring the people closer to Jewish tradition rather than isolating themselves from the less traditional). In this respect the Sephardic way is still alive. It stands in sharp contrast to the isolationist approach of the Ashkenazi Orthodox of almost every stripe. This can be seen in the respective congregational patterns of the two groups. It is recognized by all that

there are many ways to be Orthodox. In a typical religious neighborhood in Israel or in Brooklyn one may find several different hasidic *minyanim*, a *yeshivah* or Litvak *minyan*, one or more modern Orthodox congregations, perhaps Young Israel or religious Zionist, or simply one with a more dignified service and one with a more free-flowing one. All will live side-by-side in mutual recognition, but each will be homogeneous. In other words, kindred souls will find each other and stay together; few, if any, will really welcome people as permanent congregants who do not observe in an Orthodox way — indeed, in their particular style.

Contrast this with a typical Sephardic congregation. It will be composed of people of all levels of observance, from black-hatted *yeshivah* students to people who think of themselves as secular but enjoy attending services from time to time. In the congregation, all are equal. No one is asked how much or how little he observes. Sephardim assume that all people want to be traditional, only some people need greater degrees of help. That Sephardic attitude, which is typically Mediterranean, runs against the grain of the Ashkenazi pattern, where people have to declare their religious ideology and form of religious behavior to fit into one community or another within Orthodoxy as well as between Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

Sephardi congregations may be divided by the traditions of their communities of origin, but there are no religious tests *per se*. Moreover, as the immigrant generation passes, even those divisions are diminishing. In Israel, the *minhag Yerushalayim*, which, from a formal halakhic point of view is binding on all Jews in *Eretz Yisroel*, is becoming more widespread, and diaspora communities are either adopting that ritual or finding their own amalgams based upon the traditions of the Sephardim who founded them.

The strengths of the Sephardic way are also its weaknesses, while the weaknesses of the Ashkenazi way are also its strengths. If the strength of the Sephardic way is in its willingness to try to cope with the world around it through interfacing rather than isolation and its reaching out to all Jews without breaking away from tradition, those strengths also lead to its weaknesses in the tendency of Sephardim not to take firm stands in defense of the maintenance of tradition, almost to blow with the wind, as it were, rather than to be willing to make the necessary sacrifices in a world often hostile to tradition. By the same token, the weakness of the Ashkenazi tradition makes them very strong, even fanatically strong, in defending, adhering to, and trying to advance their position, whatever it might be. Hence, they are better prepared to fight against the onslaughts of modernism, one way or another, while the Sephardim find it hard to stand up to those onslaughts and to the proposed responses to them developed by the Ashkenazim. The tendency of the Sephardim has been simply to give in when confronted with such an iron-willed assertion of what is right. It should be noted that this is true with regard to both the

religious and the Zionist socialist establishments in Israel, where the majority of the Sephardim found themselves after the break-up of the traditional Sephardic world.

What of the Future?

The destruction of the matrices of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic worlds may make it more difficult for Sephardim to maintain the continuity of their religious tradition. At the same time, it makes it possible to attract non-Sephardim, who are seeking a Judaism of that kind, to the Sephardic way. Can it be done? Only if there is a major effort to revive Sephardic halakhic interpretation, to train Sephardic rabbinical leadership, and to present the Sephardic way as an equally valid expression of Judaism, one that avoids Reformation-style schismatics and speaks on behalf of an organic Judaism through which Jews, as a group, are linked to a common tradition, while, as individuals, they make their own choices as to how to relate to and express that tradition. Some such cross-fertilization does exist. For example, the late Rabbi Haim David HaLevy Donin, an Ashkenazi, was much impressed with the *Mekor Hayyim*, the popular halakhic guide of his Sephardic colleague of similar name referred to above, and drew heavily on it for his books on the *To Be a Jew* series.

At the present time, another effort is underway to build a *Beit Midrash L'Rabbanim* in the classic Sephardic mold in Jerusalem, led by a group of Sephardic communal activists. The head of the *Beit Midrash*, Rabbi Dr. Avraham Shalem, was a student of Rabbi Uziel's, the last to carry on the classic Sephardic manner. The institution itself, *Ne'ot Desheh*, is operating as a continuation of an earlier body, whose nearly 100-year-old charter provides that rabbinical education must include Jewish history and thought, languages, sciences, and general education, as well as rabbinical studies. This effort is probably the last chance that will be available to revive the Sephardic way of learning as part of a continuous tradition. A similar effort is underway in Tel Aviv.

The revival of a living organic Judaism of this kind is the need of the hour in Jewish life. The best opportunity for doing so is through the Sephardic way. A major effort must be launched to reconstruct the Sephardic halakhic tradition and make it a living tradition, with *poskim* addressing the great religious questions of our time in the Sephardic way. The restoration of Sephardic modes of teaching and learning is needed, as is the establishment of educational institutions, particularly on a higher level, that will provide a home for those modes and will train people able to express and continue the Sephardic way. All of this must be done through scholarship, but whether or not the scholarship becomes part of a living heritage of the Jewish people is another question.

The Jewish Profile of the Spanish-Portuguese Community of London During the Seventeenth Century

YOSEF KAPLAN

FROM THE 1580S UNTIL THE BEGINNING of the eighteenth century, the Spanish-Portuguese diaspora in Western Europe and the New World became consolidated. Unlike the Eastern Sephardic diaspora, which was established close to the time of the expulsion from Spain and Portugal and was mainly concentrated in Islamic countries, and whose members were exiles bringing the traditions of Sephardic Judaism with them to their new homes, the Western Sephardic diaspora came into being with the arrival of New Christians and Marranos, who fled from the Iberian monarchies and their satellites and settled in lands whose gates had hitherto been closed to Jews. These refugees had lived for generations cut off from Judaism, and brought with them a spiritual and cultural heritage entirely different from that of their Eastern brethren. Their Jewish education was shallow and exiguous, and the first Jewish community which they encountered was generally the one which they themselves had created. On the other hand, they arrived imbued with the values of Iberian culture, for many of their members had been educated in Jesuit monasteries and the best universities of Spain and Portugal. Their European and Christian education was broad and rich and continued to leave its mark on their cultural and social life even after they had rejoined the Jewish world.¹ They entered the Jewish tradition and established communities which accepted the authority of the Halakhah, but their way to Judaism was far from simple, for spiritual ferment was a prominent characteristic of their religious history. From being New Christians in the "Lands of Apostasy," they became New Jews in the lands of freedom where they had found refuge, and their encounter with Judaism brought them to create new syntheses and intellectual values which they had internalized in Spain and Portugal. Their encounter with Judaism was fraught with ideological tension and conflicts of values, constantly

1. For general background see R. Barnett and W. Schwab (eds.), *The Western Sephardim. The Sephardi Heritage*, vol. II (Grendon Northants, 1990); and cf. Y. Kaplan, "The Sephardic Diaspora in Northwestern Europe and the New World" (Hebrew), in H. Beinart (ed.), *Moreshet Sefarad*, Jerusalem, in press.

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threatened by the danger of deviance from traditional religious norms.² Both the lay leaders and the rabbis of the new communities occasionally waged bitter battles against deviants and heterodox members who contested the boundaries of the new collective identity of the Marranos who had returned to Judaism. Many of those rejoining their ancestral religion stumbled on the path because of the burden of the commandments, which was repugnant to them; some returned to the “Lands of Idolatry” (*terras de idolatria*), that is, the Catholic countries where Judaism was forbidden, or else they broke out of the confines of Jewish life and assimilated into the majority society of their new surroundings.³

One cannot understand the history of the Spanish and Portuguese community in London except in the broad context of the entire Western Sephardic diaspora. Examination of its organization, ordinances, institutions, social structure, and the spiritual orientations which emerged within it, shows that this community was entirely immersed in the historical experience of the “*Nação Judeo Espanhola-Portuguesa* (The nation of Spanish-Portuguese Jews, or “The Nation”). The *Sha’ar Ha-Shamayim* congregation was established after a rich network of communities and settlement points were already flourishing, well situated on the important international trade routes, mainly those between northwestern Europe and the Iberian Peninsula (especially Portugal), and, by virtue of its links with Portugal, also with northeastern Brazil and the Caribbean.⁴

The world of the Sephardic Jewish *conversos* was well organized, and the rise of the community in London was the fruit of the combined efforts of highly experienced international merchants from Andalusia, Portugal, southern France, the Canary Islands, and elsewhere. After the collapse of the Dutch settlement in northeastern Brazil, when the

2. See the writings of I.S. Révah and, especially, *Spinoza et le Dr. Juan de Prado* (Paris-La Haye, 1959); and see also his article, “Les Marranes,” *Revue des Etudes Juives*, CXVIII (1959-60): 29-77. See also Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism, the Life and Work of Isaac Orobio de Castro*, (Oxford, 1989); *idem*, “Spiritual Ferment Within the Spanish-Portuguese Community of Amsterdam in the Sixteenth Century” (Hebrew) in H. Beinart (ed.), *Moreshet Sefarad*. The expression “New Jew” (*Judio nuevo*) was used in the Iberian Peninsula during the seventeenth century. See the testimony of Jacinto Vázquez Araujo before the Spanish Inquisition in 1687: “*aunque toda su familia han sido Christianos viejos, este confesante quiere ser Judío nuevo.*” (National Historical Archives, Madrid, Toledo Inquisition, file no. 187, fol. 103r.)

3. See Y. Kaplan, “The Travels of Portuguese Jews from Amsterdam to the ‘Lands of Idolatry’ (1644-1724),” in *idem* (ed.), *Jews and Conversos* (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 197-224; and to complete the picture until the mid-eighteenth century, see also *idem*, “Rulings of the Rabbinical Court of the Sephardi-Portuguese Community in Amsterdam in the Eighteenth Century and Their Historical and Social Significance” (Hebrew), in *Mekharim ‘al Toldot Yahadut Holland*, V, Y. Michman (ed.), (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 28-30.

4. See especially the work of J.I. Israel, “Spain and the Dutch Sephardim, 1609-1660,” *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XII (1978): 1-61; *idem*, “The Economic Contribution of Dutch Sephardi Jewry to Holland’s Golden Age, 1595-1713,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 96 (1983): 505-535. On the Spanish-Portuguese merchants in Hamburg, see H. Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der untern Elbe* (Wiesbaden, 1958).

Portuguese recovered Pernambuco, and the Jewish community of Recife died out, the merchants sought a new center in which to strike root, and thence to renew the commercial tie, so vital to their economy, with the Caribbean islands.⁵

The present article treats the history of the London community until the end of the seventeenth century, that is, while the synagogue established in 1656 was still at Creechurch Lane, before the community moved to the splendid building in Bevis Marks and before Hakham David Nieto ascended to the rabbinate. The focus of our discussion will be the question of the Jewish profile of the new community, and what distinguished it, in this context, from the other Western Sephardic communities already existing at that time.

English Jewry has been fortunate in that learned and prominent historians have made detailed studies of the embryonic stage and the first stirrings of the *Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim* congregation at the end of Cromwell's rule and during the Restoration, the early reign of Charles II.⁶ The comprehensive and stimulating study by Yishayahu Tishby, published but a few years ago, sheds new light on the first days of this community, and, especially, on the fateful year during which Rabbi Jacob Sasportas served as the Hakham of the community.⁷ Nevertheless, despite the abundance of information found in the studies so far published, an area remains where the historian may stake a claim of his

5. On this aspect of Sephardic Jewish activity to renew the Jewish presence in England, see the study by J.I. Israel, "Menasseh Ben Israel and the Dutch Sephardic Colonization Movement of the Mid-Seventeenth Century (1645-1657)," in Y. Kaplan, H. Méchoulán, R. Popkin (eds.), *Menasseh Ben Israel and His World* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 130-163.

6. We cannot mention here all the works written on this subject, but among the important studies see: L. Wolf, "Crypto-Jews under the Commonwealth," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society in England (TJHSE)*, I (1893-1894): 55-58 (henceforth: Wolf, "Crypto-Jews"); *idem*, "The Jewry of the Restoration, 1660-1665," *TJHSE*, V (1902-1905): 5-42 (henceforth: Wolf, "Restoration"); M. Gaster, *History of the Ancient Synagogue of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (London, 1901); W.S. Samuel, "The First London Synagogue of the Resettlement," *TJHSE*, X (1921-1923): 1-147; L.D. Barnett, *El Libro de los Acuerdos* (Oxford, 1931), (henceforth: Barnett, *Libro*); *idem*, *Bevis Marks Records*, I (Oxford, 1940) (henceforth: Barnett, *Bevis Marks*); A.M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England* (London, 1952); C. Roth, "The Resettlement of the Jews in England in 1656," in V.D. Lipman (ed.), *Three Centuries of Anglo-Jewish History* (London, 1961), pp. 1-25; H. Beinart, "The Jews in the Canary Islands: A Re-evaluation," *TJHSE*, XXV (1973-1975): 47-86 (henceforth: Beinart, "The Jews in the Canary Islands"); D.S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Re-admission of the Jews in England, 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982); for an informative summary of the first fifty years of the *Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim* community, see E.R. Samuel, "The First Fifty Years" in *Three Centuries of Anglo-Jewish History*, pp. 27-44 (henceforth: Samuel, "First Fifty Years"); on the social history of the community during the first generation of its existence, see A.S. Diamond, "The Community of the Resettlement, 1656-1684: A Social Survey," *TJHSE*, XXIV (1974): 134-150 (henceforth: Diamond, "Community").

7. See Y. Tishby, "New Information about the Community of Conversos in London According to the Letters of Sasportas of 1665" (Hebrew) in *Gahut ahar Golah, Studies in Jewish History Dedicated to Professor Hayim Beinart* (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 470-496 (henceforth: Tishby, "New Information").

own. The ordinances and decisions in the registers of the *Mahamad* (leaders of the community) from the late 1670s on have not been fully examined, nor has notice been taken of the place of the Sephardic congregation in London in the early processes of modernization of the Western Sephardic diaspora.

In 1656, twenty-six Portuguese men, members of the “Nation,” were dwelling in London — including, for a brief time, Menasseh ben Israel, who was seeking formal approval by Cromwell’s government for Jewish settlement. They comprised the first kernel and founders of the new community.⁸ They were not all cut from the same cloth. Most were New Christians who had not yet tasted full and open Jewish life. Among them were the products of mixed families, New Christians married to Old Christians, and even some who came from an entirely Christian background. Antonio Fernandez Caravajal, the central figure in the group, seems to have been such a one.⁹ Only a few of these men had arrived in London after spending any time at all in a free Jewish community. These included “Manuel Martínez Dormido,” actually David Abarbanel Dormido, who had arrived from Amsterdam, and Simón de Caceres, who had arrived from Hamburg, along with Moses Israel Atias, the first Rabbi of the congregation.¹⁰

Almost all of the men of this group hid scrupulously behind the mask of Catholicism, at least until the Robles affair broke out in 1656 threatening their status, upon which Cromwell granted them, though only orally, permission to practice their rite in a synagogue and to bury their dead in a separate cemetery.¹¹ Until then they had been accustomed to pray in secret, in private quorums, in the home of Fernandez Caravajal and in other houses, and, so as to maintain the outward impression of Catholicism, they participated in masses celebrated in the chapel of the Spanish embassy. They also buried their dead in Christian cemeteries, as though they were Catholics in every sense. Moreover, even after they were permitted to express their hidden Jewish identity, not all of them rushed to do so. Some, like Antonio de Porto — actually Abraham de Porto — delayed revealing their Judaism and continued to live as Christians for some time.¹² For quite a while almost all of them continued to hide behind their aliases, their Christian names and titles, which they had used in public and economic life. Their Jewish names were used only within the congregation and for ritual purposes

8. See Wolf, “Crypto-Jews,” pp. 66-75.

9. See L. Wolf, “The First English Jew: Notes on Antonio Fernandez Caravajal, With Some Biographical Documents,” *TJHSE*, II (1894-1895): 14-48.

10. See Barnett, *Bevis Marks* I, p. 506.

11. On this incident, see H.S.Q. Henriques, *The Jews and the English Law* (Oxford, 1908), pp. 102-107; see also Wolf, “Crypto-Jews,” pp. 60-66; Tishby, “New Information,” pp. 70 ff. The most up to date summary of this matter is found in D. Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 235 ff.

12. On him, see Wolf, “Crypto-Jews,” p. 65; Wolf, “Restoration,” p. 8.

in the synagogue. As we shall see below, some of them were also buried in Christian cemeteries even after the establishment of the Jewish cemetery at Mile End. This pattern of double life not only failed to vanish at the beginning of the Restoration, when they received official and explicit recognition from Charles II, but it expanded and grew more acute.

In 1663, we find fifty-seven new names of Portuguese men who had settled in London, not included in the aforementioned list of community founders. Some of these were refugees who had fled from the talons of the Lusitanian Inquisition, which was increasing its pressure on the *conversos* at that time. Others arrived with the retinue of Catherine of Braganza to assist in her marriage to Charles II.¹³ The most prominent of these were Duarte da Silva, who was placed in charge of arranging the transfer of the queen's dowry to England, and Rodrigues Marques. It should be pointed out that Duarte da Silva did not officially join the new community until the end of his days. Similar to him, to a certain degree, was also Fernando Mendes da Costa, who seems to have arrived before that time, and not with the retinue of Catherine, as was previously thought. He kept a certain distance from communal life, and his son, Alvaro da Costa, is also mentioned among the uncircumcised members of the congregation, on the detailed list of 414 members of the "Nation" in London in the early 1680s.¹⁴

Yishayahu Tishby succeeded in identifying Solomon Franco and one of the Francia brothers among the members of the community with whom Rabbi Jacob Sasportas came into conflict in 1664-65, because they refused to accept fully the burden of the Halakhah, and especially because of their unwillingness to be circumcised.¹⁵ It would not be going too far to identify Duarte da Silva — or perhaps Fernando Mendes da Costa — with the man about whom Sasportas wrote the following remarks, which he sent from London to Jehoshiyahu Pardo:

13. Wolf, "Restoration," pp. 5 ff.

14. We have no solid proof that Duarte da Silva openly affiliated himself with Judaism towards the end of his life. After leaving Portugal he lived as a Christian in London and in Antwerp. According to testimony given to the Inquisition in 1682, he died as a Jew. His second son, Isaac Israel da Silva Solis, and also his elder son's son, openly became Jews and were members of the community. See J.L. Azevedo, *Historia dos Christãos Novos Portugueses* (Lisbon, 1921), p. 425, n. 1, and cf. Samuel, "First Fifty Years," p. 33. There is no evidence that Fernando Mendes da Costa contributed to the Sephardic synagogue of London, but part of his family joined the community there. See on him and on his son, Alvaro, N. Perry, "La Chute d'une famille séfaradite: les Mendes da Costa de Londres," *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, 13 (1981): 11-25; *idem*, "Anglo-Jewry, the Law, Religious Conviction, and Self-Interest" (1665-1753), *Journal of European Studies*, 14 (1984): 9 ff. Antonio Rodrigues Marques also appears on the list of uncircumcised members of the community compiled by Abraham Israel Zagache, who arrived in London in 1680. This list is in the *Etz Hayim* library collection, and was published in full in Barnett, *Bevis Marks* I, pp. 16-20.

15. Tishby, "New Information," pp. 476 ff.

I shall not grant honor to a rabbi and to a great Torah scholar in a place where there is blasphemy, and even more so to an *apikoros* who is contemptuous of the word of the Lord. . . . And even were he great in political leadership, I should place upon him the yoke of Torah, and I should instruct him so that his leadership might be like a maidservant before her mistress and like a purchased slave before his master.¹⁶

Possibly during their first year in London these men hoped that they would be able to remain on the fence and keep their double identity. It is likely that, for some of them, such as Duarte da Silva, and, more so, for the members of the Mendes da Costa family, the connection with the "Nation" was solely ethnic. However, in order to preserve this ethnic connection, for various reasons, especially economic ones, they were willing to maintain sporadic contacts with the synagogue without obligating themselves too deeply. However, Sasportas' aggressive and uncompromising policy thwarted that effort. Quite likely, his departure from London following the plague that broke out there in 1665 led to a certain elasticity in the policy of the leadership towards those with a foot in each camp.

But even those who wholeheartedly affiliated themselves with the new Jewish way of life still retained connections with the Christian frameworks to which they had belonged or with which they had come into contact before declaring their Judaism. At least until the end of the seventeenth century many Sephardic Jews continued to contribute generously to the church of St. Catherine in London, which was close to the synagogue. The bells of that church were rung, as requested, at the funerals of Mrs. De Brito, who died in 1657, and at those of Sarah Athias and Antonio Fernandes Caravajal, who died in 1659 — though they were all buried according to Jewish law.¹⁷

The fascinating research conducted by Diamond regarding the old Sephardic cemetery (*Cemeterio Velho*) of the congregation shows that between 1656 and 1684 only 54% of the dead of this community were buried there. Of those who had dwelled in London prior to 1659, only 29% were buried in the community cemetery!¹⁸ It is not conceivable that it was merely the uncircumcised, whose burial in the Jewish cemetery was forbidden by the 1665 ordinances of the *Bikkur Holim ve-Gemilut Hasadim* Society, were buried elsewhere, that is Christian cemeteries.¹⁹ An analysis of the community register compiled by Zagache

16. Ibid., p. 481.

17. See Diamond, "Community," pp. 141 ff.

18. On this topic, see A.S. Diamond, "The Cemetery of the Resettlement," *TJHSE* XIX (1960): 163-190 (henceforth: Diamond, "Cemetery"), and see especially pp. 181 ff.

19. See *Libro de los Acuerdos* in the archives of the London Sephardic community, p. 120 (par. 7): "Não tera autoridade o admenistrador para dexar enterrar nenhum intercuncizo, nem couza sua, sem ajuntar 6 dos ancianos da Hebra, para que en com[panhi]a do Mahamad, deliberem o que lhes parecer que sera obrigado." See the English translation in Barnett, *Libro*, pp. 22-23. and cf. Tishby, "New Information," p. 480, n. 45.

between 1680 and 1684 shows that, at that time, only 5% of the Jewish population of London belonged to families of uncircumcised men (twenty-nine out of 414).²⁰ Most likely many of the members of the "Spanish-Portuguese Nation" there, even those who were active in the community and participated in its institutions, wanted to be buried in plots that they had purchased before 1656, or else next to spouses who had gone to their eternal rest before the Jews received official recognition in London. Further, there was no lack of those who feared to be buried in a Jewish cemetery lest, after their death, the public nature of this act expose their affiliation with Judaism, something which might harm the economic and commercial ties between their families and relatives and other elements in the Iberian world with whom they dealt.

In London, as elsewhere in the Western Sephardic diaspora, some Jews belonging to the "Nation" had departed from the Iberian peninsula but did not join the Jewish communities in their new homes. Instead, they preferred to live alongside them, on their margins. To this population must be added a certain number of converts, that is, people who, after officially joining the Jewish community, changed their minds and decided, for various reasons, to return to Christianity and join one of its churches or denominations. During the 1660s and 1670s we know of a number of figures active in the community, such as Agustín Coronel Chacon (who served as an agent of Portugal in London and as a central aide in arranging the marriage agreement between Charles II and Catherine), Solomon Franco, Eliahu de Lima, Isaac de Azevedo, Aaron, David, and Jonah Gabay, and yet others who converted back to Christianity in London after having become Jews.²¹ Some also returned to Portugal, such as the queen's physician, Antonio Fereira and his brother Francisco, who had kept their distance from the community from the start.²² There was also Thomas de Rojas, the son of Duarte Enriques Alvares, one of the founders of the community in London. Rojas returned to the Canary Islands and, before a tribunal of the Inquisition, voluntarily testified against his father and stepmother and described their adherence to Judaism.²³

However, with regard to the present discussion, what is more important is the phenomenon of those who kept a foot in both camps. In London, this took on particular and far-reaching social significance. The ordinance of 8 Tevet, 5438 (January 2, 1678) states:

The lords of the Mahamad, in association with the lord Hakham, and with the concurrence of the entire congregation, have decided, in the

20. See above, n. 14. See Diamond, "Cemetery," p. 186.

21. On the phenomenon of apostates in the London community at that time, see especially Diamond, "Community," pp. 142 ff.

22. See Wolf, "Restoration," p. 22.

23. See Beinart, "The Jews in the Canary Islands," p. 62, nn. 111-112; L. Wolf, *Jews in the Canary Islands* (London, 1926), p. xxxvi; cf. Tishby, "New Information," p. 482.

spirit of ordinance number 34, which explains in detail how one is to behave regarding an uncircumcised member of the Nation: if a Jewish woman . . . married someone who is not circumcised — no Jew, whether or not he is a member of this congregation, shall attend such a wedding or a party taking place following it. Moreover, it is forbidden for anyone to serve as a witness to such a wedding, or to write out the marriage contract, or to sign it, or to pronounce the seven marriage benedictions, or to be present when they are recited to make up the prayer quorum. Anyone violating any of these prohibitions will be excommunicated, and with him will be banned anyone knowing of such activity who does not inform the lords of the Mahamad that it is taking place.²⁴

Interestingly, this ordinance is also signed by the well known Abraham Francia and his brother, Jorge Francia, whose son, Simón, appears among the uncircumcised on the list compiled by Zagache. This ordinance teaches us a great deal about the special character of the uncircumcised members of the “Nation,” who lived on the margins of the London community: not only did some of them marry women of the Jewish community, but they also wished to marry them according to Jewish law and even took care to hold a Jewish wedding ceremony according to Halakhah and the tradition. The heads of the community struggled against any effort to blur the boundaries between those who were within the community, agreeing to maintain an openly Jewish way of life, and those who preferred to persist in the habits which they had acquired as *conversos* and to preserve their Christian image, since, for them, Judaism was a matter solely of their inner identity. Regarding some of those who kept a foot in both camps, one gains the impression that, for them, Judaism was no more than a matter of identity of interest with an ethnic group.

Uncircumcised men were, as noted, deprived of the right of burial in the congregation’s cemetery, and only in exceptional instances did the leaders agree to bury them in a special area beyond the fence. This is what was done in the case of Diego de Mezquita. In 1670, he arrived in London from Middleburg, in the Zeeland Province of the Dutch Republic, suffering from a serious illness. On his deathbed, Diego promised in the presence of several members of the community to have himself circumcised after his recovery. He also ordered his wife and brother, who were living in Bordeaux, to be sure to bring his son to Bayonne to have him initiated into the covenant of Abraham. Diego passed away before accomplishing these wishes, and the members of the *Mahamad*, confronted a difficult dilemma. According to the regulations, they could

24. See *Libro do Mahamad* in the archives of the Sephardic community of London (21, no. 103), fol. 64. Is there any connection between this regulation and the fact that, in 1675, or perhaps 1678, Fernando Mendes, the physician and cousin of Alvaro da Costa, married Isabel Rachel Marques? Fernando Mendes remained a Catholic all his life and became the physician of Queen Catherine in 1678. Because of Isabel’s marriage to him, she lost her part in the estate of her uncle, Abraham Rodrigues Marques; see N. Perry, “Anglo-Jewry,” pp. 14-16.

not bury his body in the community cemetery. After a special debate on the affair, they came to the decision "to bury him in the cemetery in a place separate from our brethren."²⁵

It was also forbidden to provide any religious services whatsoever to someone who had stopped paying his dues and contributions, thus suspending his membership in the community, and this provision applied to the delinquent's entire household.²⁶ Various community regulations refer to these people as "those who have withdrawn in order to enjoy liberty" (*los que se retiraron para gozar de su libertad*).²⁷ The leaders permitted maintaining conversation and business dealings with them, offering special justification for so doing: "so as not to interfere with commerce" (*por ñao perturbar o negoceo*).²⁸

However, the most interesting regulation, which clarifies the type of relations prevailing between the members of the group who were active in the congregation and those who were marginal, is that of 7 Elul, 5438 (August 25, 1678), stating:

It has been reported to the lords of the Mahamad by a number of those who observe the Torah that certain Jews, not only from among those who do not attend the synagogue, but also from those who do attend, often blaspheme against the Lord and violate the Sabbath, harming their Nation, for in gross desire for wealth and in great wantonness, they go to the post building on the Sabbath to deliver and receive messages, so that even the hair on the heads of gentiles stands on end, and they ask: is this indeed the nation which prides itself in observing the holy day better than any other nation? . . . In our entire diaspora we have found no congregation where such things transpire; and in order to prevent that sin from striking root . . . the lords of the Mahamad have seen fit, with the agreement of the lord Hakham, to proclaim publicly that any Jew, be he who he may, *whether he be among those who attend the synagogue or those who do not*, he may not go to the post office and take messages of any kind from there on the Sabbath, whether for pay or not for pay, and anyone who violates this decision will be banned from the community and excommunicated [emphasis ours].²⁹

The language of this regulation indicates that the leaders of *Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim* regarded themselves as responsible not only for those who took an active part in community life or who were numbered among the members of the congregation, but also for those members of the "Nation" who lived on the margins of the community. Not only did they see fit to include them in the group and to impose collective discipline upon them in matters that were considered vital because of their

25. His moving story is told in detail in the *Libro de los Acuerdos* of the *Sha'ar Ha-Shamayim* congregation, fol. 20r.

26. See, for example, the ordinance of the New Moon of Tammuz, 5425 (June 14, 1665) in *Libro de los Acuerdos*, fol. 13r.

27. See *Libro do Mahamad*, fol. 16r.

28. See *Libro de los Acuerdos*, fol. 13r.

29. See *Libro do Mahamad*, fol. 1r.

practical or symbolic meaning, but they also permitted themselves to threaten them with severe punishments, including the penalty of excommunication, for publicly violating the Sabbath. From the spirit of this regulation one can infer that the community leadership assumed that even those who did not attend synagogue lent a heedful ear to the decisions made in the chambers of the *Mahamad*, and that they, too, could be deterred from certain deeds by the threat of excommunication. In other Western Sephardic communities, a clear and sharp distinction was made between members of the group who were active within its confines, accepting the authority of Judaism, and those who preferred for various reasons to remain "outside the walls," refusing to accept the burden of the commandments and the authority of the leaders and Hakhamim.³⁰ These recalcitrants and deviants were excommunicated in communities like Amsterdam and Hamburg, but in London the situation was different. While the leadership withdrew its services from those who dwelled at the margins and even forbade marital ties with them, nevertheless, it was careful not to burn all its bridges to that population and, on various levels, it even made sure to maintain ties with them.

In contrast to the opinion prevailing among scholars, which maintains that the London community refrained from imposing the penalty of excommunication, and that it was merely threatened in certain ordinances, I have noticed that this penalty was actually imposed, though not to the extent common in the communities of Amsterdam and Hamburg, and I have also found a handful of people banned from this community between 1678 and 1698. On 3 Nissan, 5438 (March 26, 1678), Abraham Nabarro was excommunicated for seven days because he violated his oath not to play games of chance for four years;³¹ on 21 Heshvan, 5443 (November 22, 1682), Samuel de Caceres was banned for unruly behavior in the synagogue;³² and three other men incurred the penalty of expulsion from the synagogue for periods ranging from one to three months.³³ In the course of the eighteenth century this type of punishment was imposed increasingly, and, in 1710, Isaac Coroneel Senior was excommunicated for allegedly kidnaping Rebecca the daughter of Aaron Pereira, attempting to marry her against her father's will.³⁴

In view of these examples, it is significant that the leadership in

30. On this topic, see Y. Kaplan, "The Social Functions of the 'Herem' in the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century," in J. Michman (ed.), *Dutch Jewish History* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 111-155.

31. See *Libro do Mahamad*, fol. 1.

32. *Ibid.*, fol. 13v.

33. This refers to Asher Vidal and Shabetai Nabarro (see *Ibid.*, fol. 22v.) and to Moses Rodrigues de Leon (*Ibid.*, fol. 32r.).

34. *Ibid.*, fols. 74r. ff. I am discussing this affair at length in a book currently in progress on deviance and punishment in the Western Sephardic diaspora.

London did not impose the penalty of excommunication against those who refrained from attending synagogue and from taking an active part in community life. Within its walls, this community occasionally took harsh measures against violators of the commandments and those who threw off the yoke of the Halakhah, but, at the same time, it showed more than a little consideration towards recalcitrants who preferred to remain outside. This policy had far-reaching consequences, and, in the long run, these were without doubt disintegrative and destructive. However, during the second half of the seventeenth century it preserved the delicate equilibrium prevailing between the various segments of the Spanish-Portuguese "Nation." Halakhic barriers were not applied to commercial life, and the leaders of the community sought to avoid conflicts and confrontations which might lead to rifts that would be dangerous to the vital economic interests of the members of the community, whose trade depended upon cooperation with other merchants belonging to the "Nation" who still sat on the fence. Some of these fence-squatters were central figures in the economic life of the *Nação*, and to strike at them and the connection with them could have dealt a severe blow to the entire economic structure of the Portuguese community.

Not a few members of the "Nation," including central figures such as Duarte de Silva, Fernando Mendes da Costa, and others, refrained from openly and fully affiliating themselves with Judaism for various reasons, all of which could be listed only with difficulty. Here we shall discuss only one of them, which should provide a good illustration of the environment in which some of this community lived.

In 1663, Fernando Mendes da Costa wrote from London to his brother Jorge in Rome, imploring his to muster all possible assistance for Francisco Manoel de Melo, who had just then left London for Rome as an emissary to engage in negotiations with the Pope regarding the recognition of Portugal. The last paragraph of da Costa's letter is extremely revealing: "We have told him [de Melo] that when the business is concluded, 8 or 9 hundred people now in Castile and France will go to that kingdom [Portugal], and many from the north here."³⁵

Fernando Mendes da Costa, dwelling within the safe confines of London, was toying with the idea that many New Christians from Portugal would return to their homeland if it were to change its policy towards them, that is to say, if it ended social discrimination and persecution by the Inquisition. Among those who might emigrate to Portugal, Mendes da Costa also included "many people from our northern

35. The letter is published in full in the Portuguese original in Wolf, "Restoration," pp. 30 ff, and see the English translation there. However, Wolf misinterpreted it, concluding that "Fernando da Costa was organizing an emigration of Marranos from Spain and Portugal into Italy and England." See *Ibid.*, p. 20. Cf. the interpretation of Samuel, "First Fifty Years," pp. 33-34, who understood the sentence of da Costa's letter correctly, and also analyzed its political meanings.

land" and from "the North, here," that is, England, who, in his opinion, would be prepared to return to their place of origin, with all that this implied, including reversion to the Catholic religion. Evidently, for a man holding these views, not only did it make no sense to assume an obligation towards the Jewish community and to cast one's lot with it, but, in fact, to do so would create many difficulties and dangers for the future. It is no coincidence that some of the progeny of the author of this letter figure among the uncircumcised men listed in the aforementioned document of Zagache.³⁶

The Spanish-Portuguese community in London grew and expanded at a rapid pace during its first fifty years, becoming an important and central factor in the Western Sephardic diaspora. But the centrifugal tendencies active within it from the first left their mark on its character and substance, and drove many of its members from the center to the periphery. The routes towards assimilation and integration into the surrounding community were traced upon it from its very first days.³⁷

36. See above, n. 14, and see Tishby, "New Information," p. 479, n. 45.

37. On the tendency toward assimilation among the Sephardim in London, see T.M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990), and, see especially ch. 1, pp. 9-33, which discusses Sephardic Jewry between 1656-1837.

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The Final Disposition of the Synagogues and Other Jewish Communal Property After the Expulsion

JOSÉ LUIS LACAVE

Translated by Wilfredo Morales

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPULSION edict against the Jews presented diverse problems not foreseen by the Crown upon its ratification. One of the main problems dealt with the final disposition of community property (synagogues, cemeteries, hospitals and other buildings). In the edict, the Crown granted and guaranteed the right of the Jews to “sell or otherwise dispose of their personal property and real estate in a free and voluntary manner” before July 31, 1492.¹ At first, this was interpreted as referring only to personal property and not community property. This indicates that the matter of real estate was not truly considered by the Crown upon signing the edict.

Without a doubt, this created a “legal quagmire” that many took advantage of by diverse interpretations of the authorization conceded by the monarchs. For their part, the Jews understood that they were also entitled to sell communal property. In the meantime, cities, municipalities and officials in some places interpreted the edict to mean that Jews could sell only their own property, and that community property should become property of the city or an official. Finally, the monarchs put an end to the disagreement by confiscating for the Crown all of the community property of the Jews.

According to Andrés Bernaldez, chronicler of the royal family and an eyewitness to these events, the expulsion provoked heightened religious fervor among the Jews. The rabbis, comparing their departure with the Exodus from Egypt, encouraged the people, telling them that God wanted to take them to the promised land. Those who were richer assisted the poorer with the expenses caused by their march, “and one and the other benefitted from much charity.”²

In the months following the initial publication of the edict, but before its actual implementation, one of the gravest concerns facing

1. The expulsion edict has been published many times. It can be seen in F. Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien*, vol. II, *Kastilien/Inquisitionsakten* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 404-407.

2. Andrés Bernaldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*. Manuel Gómez-Moreno y Juan de M. Carriazo, eds. (Madrid, 1962). Chapter CX, pp. 253-254.

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the Jewish committees — the *kehillot* — was how to finance the costs that would be incurred by days on the road, the embarkation from a port, entry into another country, etc. Soon, the leaders thought about the possibility of selling communal property and using the proceeds to subsidize the poor. To this end, representatives of the congregation of Agreda sold their synagogue to the municipal government in June, 1492, according to a document in the municipal archives.³ The congregation of Plasencia sold their cemetery to the dean, Diego de Jerez.⁴ One of the Segovia synagogues was sold to a private citizen.⁵ In July, 1492, the representatives of the assembly of Gerona did the same thing with the two synagogues of that celebrated Jewish neighborhood, one of them already in ruins.⁶

During this period, in which the Jews disposed of their communal property, we should mention some cases in which the congregation did not sell such property, but, for diverse reasons, donated it — it would seem — graciously. In this manner, on July 14, 1492, representatives of the congregation of Gerona donated their cemetery to the nobleman, Don Juan de Sarriera. According to the deed of transfer, this was done in exchange for “the benefits and favors received and continued to be received by the community and the Jews of Gerona” from said gentleman.⁷ A short time later, Don Juan began building a palace tower on the grounds — using, in its construction, many gravemarkers from the donated cemetery, which were usually of a superior quality of stone. To this day, we can see Hebrew inscriptions on the walls and floors of the palace tower of the Sarrieras that exists in Gerona, in the area called Palau Sacosta. On June 29, 1492, the congregation of Villalpando donated their synagogue to Doña Mencía de Mendoza, noblewoman of Villalpando and Countess of Haro in exchange for the “grand gifts and favors” that the Jews had received from her.⁸ Two years later, in 1494, Doña Mencía sold the synagogue to the city council.

Meanwhile, city councils were not happy with the Jewish interpretation of the edict, in which the authorization to sell was set forth. As previously noted, as they understood the edict, it referred only to the right of the Jews to sell individual personal property but not that which was communal. From this, they inferred that Jewish communal property should be confiscated by the various cities. As a result, the councils

3. D.J. Hernández, *Historia de Agreda* (Soria, 1950), pp. 100-101.

4. Fray Alonso Fernández, *Historia y anales de la ciudad y obispado de Plasencia* (Madrid, 1967), p. 155.

5. Y. Moreno Koch, “La venta de sinagogas en Segovia al tiempo de la expulsión,” *Sefarad* 46 (1986): 345-351.

6. E. Mirambell i Belloc, “Documents referents a la sinagoga y al cementiri jueus de Girona,” *Jornades d'Historia dels Jueus a Catalunya* (Girona, 1990), pp. 237-244.

7. Ibid.

8. The deed of donation is published in the works of L. Calvo Lozano, *Historia de la villa de Villalpando* (Zamora, 1981), pp. 147-149.

began to threaten prospective buyers of the communal property with loss of their money, because the cities had a right to the property and were planning to confiscate it. In view of this situation, a legal battle was planned for the month of May between the Jews and the councils. They each appealed to the monarchs, thinking that they would win. As a result, May 25th saw the monarchs write a letter to the Council of Plasencia, in which they asked them to justify their order that no one was to buy the synagogues, thereby impeding the edict of expulsion.⁹ A few days earlier, on May 14, 1492, the monarchs had published a letter, at the request of the Jewish communities, reiterating the rights of the Jews to sell their property without any hindrance, as stated in the edict.¹⁰ It seems that, at this time, the monarchs considered that the Jews had a right to sell their communal property as well as their private possessions.

Nevertheless, in this letter they again referred to the property of the Jews in an ambiguous manner, without expressly mentioning communal property. The city councils once again began to interpret the edict in their own manner. As a result, we know of synagogue property being confiscated by councils, as occurred in Tortosa.¹¹

Such a reaction, similar to that of the councils, was observed among many nobles to whom these cities, including the Jewish neighborhoods, belonged. In their realm, these nobles prohibited anyone from buying Jewish property, indicating that everything which belonged to the Jews belonged to them. As the date of the expulsion arrived, Jewish properties in these areas, including that which was communal, reverted in a normal manner to the corresponding noble. As an example, we note that the cases of San Martín de Valdeiglesias¹² and Buitrago,¹³ where the property of the Jews remained in the hands of the Duke of the Infantado, and of Híjar,¹⁴ where the Duke kept the property. Still, we certainly know of a case — that of Villadiego — in which the Marquess of Santa Cruz bought communal property, including the synagogue and the cemetery,¹⁵ from the Jews.

9. General Archive of Simancas (A.G.S.) General Registry of the Seal, vol. 528. Letter of May 23, 1492.

10. P. León Tello published this letter, *Judíos de Avila* (Avila, 1963), doc. XXXI, pp. 95-6.

11. F. Pastor y Luis published the corresponding document in the *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura* 2 (1921), pp. 130-131.

12. F. Cantera Burgos, "La judería de San Martín de Valdeiglesias (Madrid)," *Sefarad* 29 (1969): 217-312.

13. F. Cantera Burgos — C. Carrete Parrondo, "La judería de Buitrago," *Sefarad* 32 (1972): 4-87.

14. M. Laborda, *Recuerdos de Híjar* (Zaragoza, 1980), p. 184.

15. L. Huidobro "Contribución a la historia de los hebreos en la diócesis y provincia de Burgos," *Boletín de la Comisión de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Burgos* 12 (1933): 398-405 and 425-431.

For their part, the bishops and the religious faculties of Spanish universities believed that they had rights to the synagogues, basing this on the religious nature of the buildings. They also tried to threaten prospective buyers and impede the sales. Wherever possible, following the date of expulsion, they kept the synagogues. Such were the cases in Talavera de la Reina, where the Archbishop of Toledo, the well-known Cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro González de Mendoza, confiscated all of the synagogues of the city;¹⁶ in Sigüenza, where the bishop was the same Pedro G. de Mendoza;¹⁷ and in Tuy, where the communal property of the Jews became property of the bishop.¹⁸

Following the month of May, the Crown should have realized the enormous problem that they had created with the matter of communal property. To resolve the matter, they decided upon the solution most convenient for the royal interests: to confiscate the property for the Crown. At this point, property could neither be sold nor confiscated by anyone else. There is doubt as to when this decision was taken by the monarchs, whether in the month of June or sometime after July 31st, with retroactive effect. In the municipal archive of Toledo, there exists a letter from the monarchs dated June 25 in Guadalupe, in which they said that, until they made a final decision, no Jewish communal property was to be bought or sold, under penalty of losing the money invested.¹⁹ Notwithstanding, we know of cases during July in which Jews sold their synagogues to individuals, as occurred in Gerona, whose sale we previously discussed. We also know that the Tortosa council confiscated a synagogue in that same month of July! It seems probable that the royal letter of June 25 was taken only as advice, since the final decision to confiscate Jewish property for the Crown would not be made until the Jews actually left. Either way, the end result was that the vast majority of Jewish communal property passed into the hands of the Crown. This is what occurred in the important Jewish communities of Toledo, Guadalajara, Trujillo, Zamora, Palencia, Salamanca, and partially in Zaragoza, Segovia and Ávila. The same occurred in the minor Jewish communities of Jaca, Calahorra, Miranda de Ebro, Turégano, Sahagún, Ciudad Rodrigo and many more.

Once confiscated, the properties had different destinies and uses, as we will discuss in the second part of this article.

Between April 1st and July 31, Spanish Jews lost or divested themselves of property in the following ways:

1. sold by the Jews

16. P. León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo* (Madrid, 1979), vol. II, núm. 1668, p. 590.

17. F. Cantera Burgos — C. Carrete Parrondo, *Las juderías medievales de la provincia de Guadalajara* (Madrid, 1975), p. 85.

18. E. Iglesias Almeida, "Los judíos de Tuy," *Sefarad* 47 (1987): 73-80.

19. P. León Tello published this letter, *Judíos de Toledo* (Madrid, 1979), vol. I doc. 87, pp. 541-543.

2. donated by the Jews
3. confiscated by the city councils
4. confiscated by nobles
5. confiscated by the bishops
6. confiscated by the Crown

A unique case concerns the city of Oña. The land on which the synagogue was built, as well as the building itself, belonged to the local monastery. It had been rented to the Jews since 1405,²⁰ according to a document in the monastery. When the Jews left Oña, the property naturally reverted to its owner, the abbey.

As we have said, once the date of departure of the Jews arrived, the majority of the synagogues, cemeteries and other communal property remained in the hands of the Crown. But, what did the monarchs do with the property? What was its final disposition? We shall now try to answer these questions.

From the beginning of August, many petitions began arriving in the Royal Court from city councils, religious orders, bishops and university groups, abbeys, and even from individuals, asking that the synagogues left by the Jews be ceded to them, the petitioners. All of the entreating institutions and individuals set forth in their petitions what fate they wanted to give to these now empty and abandoned buildings, and alleged different reasons to justify the need of the city, the religious order, etc., fearing that their solicitation would not be heard or granted. They attested that they needed the building for a church, a hospital, a convent, etc. Individuals, seeking ownership of Jewish synagogues and other communal property, sought to settle old debts with the Crown, as will be noted later.

The monarchs studied each case carefully. Hence, most of the time, they did not make a decision until months or, in some cases, years had passed. In addition, there were cases in which, after they had made a ruling, another petitioner would state reasons against the monarchs' original decision. The monarchs were then obligated to review the case and issue a new decision. This occurred in Trujillo. The Order of Dominican Nuns wanted to establish themselves in the city, and had asked for the synagogue and adjacent buildings in which to install their convent. That was sufficient for the monarchs, who granted their petition on August 9th. But, then, the city council, which had also asked for the synagogue to make it a parish church, alleged that a church was more necessary than a convent, as there were already "three or four" convents, which they considered sufficient. On the other hand, as the ancient Jewish neighborhood was then populated by Christians who lacked a church, it would be reasonable, according to the city council, to convert the synagogue into their parish church. In the month of

20. F. Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien*, II (Berlin, 1936), doc. 267, pp. 253-267.

November, the monarchs reaffirmed their original decision and donated the synagogue to the Dominican nuns to become their convent of Santa Isabel.²¹

What interests us here is more than just knowing whether the monarchs ruled in favor of a petition from a council, a religious order, a university, or an individual. Rather, it is knowing the final fate which befell these synagogues. Following are several examples that will allow us to form a general idea of the final disposition of the synagogues once the Jews left Spain.

A large number became either parish churches, monasteries or the chapel of a convent. Into this category falls the celebrated synagogue of Toledo, known as the Tránsito, which was donated to the Order of Calátrava for conversion into a church and a depository for its archives.²² In Zamora, the synagogue was converted into the Church of San Sebastián.²³ In Mérida, it became the Church of Santa Catalina;²⁴ in Calahorra, it was donated to the cathedral for conversion into the hermitage of San Sebastián;²⁵ in Valderas it went to the Vera Cruz friars for their chapel.²⁶ Many more synagogues were turned into churches. Thus, in Seville, one was converted into the church of San Bartolomé, and another into a Dominican convent; in Córdoba, the synagogue became the church of San Quiteria; in Plasencia into the church of Santa Isabel; in Sagunto, into the church of the "Friars de la Sangre;" in Híjar, into the church of San Antón; many more can be added.

Some synagogues were converted into hospitals. In Guadalajara, the monarchs donated a synagogue to the religious order of La Merced for conversion into a hospital for its members;²⁷ in Ciudad Rodrigo, one was converted into a hospital to be named de la Pasión,²⁸ which still exists to this day; and various others were similarly treated.

Among the synagogues donated to various city councils, we know of a pair that were destined to become "meeting houses," that is to say, the seat of the council itself, as was the case in Miranda de Ebro²⁹ and in Agreda.³⁰ In another case, in the city of Jaca, the Art Institute

21. Cf. José L. Lacave, "Sinagogas y juderías extremeñas," *Sefarad* 40 (1980): 215-234, esp. pp. 217-219. See also H. Beinart, *Trujillo. A Jewish Community in Extremadura on the Eve of the Expulsion from Spain* (Jerusalem, 1980), docs. 76, 80, 81, 86, 96.

22. F. Cantera Burgos, *Sinagogas españolas* (Madrid, 1955), p. 67.

23. August 9, 1492. A.G.S., Sello, fol. 3.

24. B. Moreno de Vargas, *Historia de la ciudad de Mérida* (Madrid, 1633), fol. 259.

25. F. Cantera Burgos, *Sinagogas españolas* (Madrid, 1955), pp. 185-188.

26. F. Cantera-A. García Abad, "Nuevas consideraciones sobre la judería de Valderas (Léon)," *Sefarad* 27 (1967): 39-69.

27. September 10, 1492. A.G.S., Sello, fol. 28.

28. F. Cantera, *Sinagogas* ..., p. 200.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

of the city was installed in a synagogue.³¹ Unfortunately, there is also the lamentable case of a synagogue converted into a slaughterhouse and the meat market of the city, as occurred in Palencia.³²

The synagogues ceded to individuals by the monarchs were, generally, converted into buildings for financial gain, to recoup money owed to them by the Crown. This was the case, for example, of the Old Synagogue of Toledo, which was ordered to be sold at auction by the monarchs and the proceeds used to repay Fernando Dávalos, Alfonso Dávalos and Fernando Suárez.³³ The synagogue of Midrás de Las Vigas, also of Toledo, was donated to Rodrigo del Mercado.³⁴ The nobles and bishops who confiscated synagogues acted in a manner similar to that of the monarchs, converting the majority of them into churches.

Regarding the Jewish cemeteries, almost all of which were confiscated by the Crown, the general rule was, on one hand, to donate the land to the corresponding city, and, on the other, to donate the stone, that is the headmarkers, to a religious order or to individuals, generally with the aim of taking advantage of them in future construction. A singular and commendable case involved the Jewish cemetery of Vitoria. There, on June 27, 1492, representatives of the city duly agreed, before R. Moshé Balid and Ismael Morataez, representative of the congregation, to respect the cemetery and not to build on it. This agreement has been respected down to our day. In 1952, the President of the Jewish Council of Bayona, whose Jews consider themselves descendants of the Vitorians, released the city from its promise, and the *Judizmendi* (Mount of the Jews), as the cemetery was formerly known, has today been converted into a garden, where a monolith is inscribed with the old agreement and the compromise agreed to in 1952 between the Jews of Bayona and the city of Vitoria.

31. Ibid., p. 233.

32. P. Léon Tello, *Los judíos de Palencia* (Palencia, 1967), pp. 330-340.

33. P. Léon Tello, *Judíos de Toledo*, I (Madrid, 1979), p. 359.

34. Ibid., p. 362.

Jewish Christians and Christian Jews in Spain, 1492 and After

RICHARD H. POPKIN

THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM SPAIN is usually treated in terms of Spanish anti-Semitism, in terms of a hatred of Jews going back to early Christian times. I should like to look at the events from a different perspective, that of Spanish Millenarianism, and the philo-Semitism of some of the dominant religious figures of the time.

As Spain became more Christianized and more unified in the late 14th and the 15th centuries, a swelling tide of Millenarian and Messianic speculation came to the surface. Ideas of the medieval monk, Joachim de Fiore, Jewish interpretations of Scripture from Nicholas of Lyra, and expectations of the imminent end of history, gained adherents. Interpretations of Joachim's prophecies and of passages in the *Revelation of St. John* were taken both as predictive of what was going to occur, and as explanations of what was taking place in the present. Spain, as Joachimite prophecy proclaimed, would be the center of the Providential drama, which would involve the conversions of the Jews, Moslems and Gentiles, the reform of religious life and learning, and the emergence of the last stage of history, the reappearance of the Lost Tribes of Israel, the liberation of Jerusalem and its rebuilding, and the Millennium, with the return of Jesus for a thousand years.

St. Vincent Ferrar, who was responsible for the pogroms of 1391 and their after-effect, was a leading mystical Millenarian who saw that the end of the world was at hand. And, according to the scenario in the Book of Revelation, the conversion of the Jews was to be the penultimate event before the Second Coming of Jesus. The forced conversions were seen by many theologians of the time, Old and New Christian, as important events for the impending developments to come. (It was argued for a century and half whether true conversion could, or should, be brought about by force.)

As the century wore on, this Millenarian attitude intensified. Leading convert theologians, like Pablo de Santa Maria, originally Solomon Ha-Levi, rabbi of Burgos, later Bishop of Burgos, and his son, Bishop Alonso de Cartagena, set forth a Jewish-Christian theology, extolling the merits of the fusion that had occurred, and offering themselves as the leaders of a Millenarian army, since they were descendants of

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the House of David, and, therefore, of the very family of the mother of Jesus! The convert theologians excoriated the unconverted Jews and provided strong ammunition for continuing the conversion campaign.

Along with this there was despair that some of the conversions were not sincere, and that the insincere converts were corrupting the Church and preventing the unconverted Jews from becoming true and believing Christians. As we know only too well, this despair helped to lead to the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition in 1481 to police the New Christians and to ferret out blasphemous or heretical behavior on their part. The order to expel the unconverted Jews from the Kingdoms of Castille and Aragon in 1492 was part of this development. (At least this is what the Catholic Kings offered as the rationale for the expulsion edict.)

One of the rising leaders of Spain, Francisco Ximines de Cisneros, 1436-1517, leader of the reformed spiritual Franciscans, later archbishop of Toledo and confessor of Queen Isabella, seems to have been strongly imbued with Millenarian expectations, and used his tremendous energy, power and the wealth of his benefice to try to prepare in every way that he could for the great events to come.

Just as in Scotland more than a century later, the union of the two crowns of Castille and Aragon was taken as a clear sign that history was moving towards its ultimate climax. Similarly, the collapse of the infidel Moorish kingdom in Spain after more than seven centuries was another important sign. Then, following the surrender of Granada in the beginning of 1492, the miraculous year was completed with the Expulsion of the Jews, and a day later by the start of the voyage of Christopher Columbus that revealed the existence of a New World, where the harbingers of the end of days, the Lost Tribes, might be found, and where the conversion of the Gentiles could take place.

Ximines had been preparing in his own way for the monumental future which he foresaw in the decades before 1492. He went into intense personal study to find the pure religion that was to flower at the end of days in the Millennium. He learned Hebrew and Aramaic from a rabbi around 1480 in Sigüenza, so that he could drink of the pure religion of the Bible and function in the very language of Jesus himself.¹ He intended to spend much of his life meditating on the Hebrew and Aramaic sources. Ximines also rigorously reformed his own life, and then that of his order, the spiritual Franciscans (whom he joined in 1484), so that he and they could be pure of heart and mind for the new age. He was going to devote his life to religious meditation

1. It is interesting that in the only source of information about the early years of Ximines' career, Alvar Gomez de Castro, *De Rebus Gestis a Francisco Ximeno, Cisnerio* (Alcala, 1569), it is said that he learned Hebrew and Aramaic from a rabbi. In later works about him, relying on this account, it is just said that he learned Hebrew and Aramaic, without explaining how.

and study, but was forcibly made Archbishop of Toledo, by order of the Pope. When appointed by Queen Isabella, he ignored the elevation until specifically ordered by the Pope to take on the post. As Archbishop of the richest and most powerful diocese in Spain, he originally tried to reform it by carrying over his rigorous poverty to the Church. He had to be commanded by the Pope to wear decent clothes, instead of just hair-shirts and sandals, and to perform his function with some degree of ornament and wealth.²

After the conquest of Granada in 1492, the Queen's confessor, Hernando de Talavera, was appointed archbishop of Granada. Ximines then became the Queen's confessor replacing Talavera, who was devoting himself to trying to convert Moors by love and not force.³ Ximines used his positions to proselytize furiously in Granada, unlike the gentle Talavera, thereby bringing many more Moors into Christianity.⁴ Ximines also tried to take charge of the Christianizing of the Indians, which Isabella wished him to do. Twelve spiritual Franciscans were sent to the New World, filled with Millenarian expectations as the result of their efforts to convert the Indians. Spreading the Gospel all over the planet, and converting the Gentiles, were other crucial parts of the Millenarian preparation.⁵

The high point of the Millenarian activities of Ximines, now Cardinal and Primate of Spain, came in 1500-1502, when he decided to establish a new university to train the pure, reformed and properly educated priests and scholars for the new and last age, and to publish God's word in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Aramaic, in the Polyglot Bible, the *Complutensis*.⁶ At the same time he also encouraged translations of the Bible and inspirational literature into Spanish for the general public, and encouraged ordinary people to find pure Christianity in themselves, without the need of institutions and outward activities.⁷

2. On Ximines' career, see Alvor Gomez de Castro, *De la hazanas de Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros*, ed. and trans. by Jose Droz Reta (Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Española, 1984), Libro primero; and Carl J. von Helefe, *The Life of Cardinal Ximenez* (London 1860), chaps., 1-5.

3. On Archbishop Talavera, see Fidel Fernandez, *Fray Hernando de Talavera, Confesor de los Reyes Catolicos y primer Arzobispo de Granada* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1942); and Jesus Suberbiola Martinez, *Real Patronato de Granada. El arzobispo Talavera, la Iglesia y el Estado Moderno (1486-1516)* (Granada: Caja general de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Granada, 1985).

4. On this see Helefe, *Op. cit.*, chap. vii.

5. See John Leddy Phelan, *the Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956).

6. So named because this was the Roman name of the town, Alcala de Henares, where the Bible text was prepared.

7. A list of such devotional works encouraged by Ximines appears in Jose C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdes and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation* (Geneva: Droz, 1970), pp. 60-61; and in Marcel Bataillon *Erasmus et Espagne* (Paris: Droz, 1937), pp. 52-53.

While in Germany and Italy, Christian scholars like Reuchlin, Agrippa van Nettesheim, and Pico della Mirandola, were beginning to learn Hebrew in order to read the Cabbala, and to find the secret messages that they believed hidden in these Jewish documents, Ximenes was proposing a truly immense project to make available the text of the Bible in the original language, with St. Jerome's Latin translation, and with the Aramaic paraphrase of ancient times, with a Latin translation. Up to 1500 only a Hebrew Bible had been printed, but not a Greek text. The Complutensian Polyglot was not only to provide the text, in as pure a form as possible, by studying various manuscripts, but also to make it available in the language of Jesus in the form of the paraphrase, the *Targum Onkelos*, written in Aramaic in ancient times. This Polyglot Bible project consumed an enormous amount of money and energy for a decade and half.⁸

To make the Biblical texts available to readers of the time, the first volume included a one and half page Greek grammar.⁹ In the second volume that was prepared, (actually vol. 5 as printed), an entire folio tome was devoted exclusively to a Hebrew grammar, a Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon and Hebrew and Aramaic dictionaries, including pronunciation aids and instructions, so that if one knew Latin one could find the equivalents in Hebrew and Aramaic, and then be able to enunciate them.¹⁰ All of this was preparation for actually reading the text of the Old Testament, which was printed in four volumes with Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Aramaic, and Latin translations of the Aramaic all available on each page. The top two-thirds of the page gave the Hebrew, Latin and Greek in separate columns. The bottom third of each page presented the Aramaic paraphrase with a Latin translation of it.¹¹

Such an undertaking required a battery of expert scholars, expert printers, and new type fonts. It was the most monumental publishing undertaking up to that point in the history of printing. Its cost is supposed to have been the equivalent of 250,000 1917-English pounds, more than the budget of most countries of the time, paid out of the

8. The logistics and expense of making the Polyglot Bible are discussed and analyzed in James P.R. Lyell, *Cardinal Ximenes, Statesman, Ecclesiastic, Soldier and Man of Letters, with an Account of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible* (London: Grafton & Co., 1917), chap. iv., See also M. Revilla Rico, *La Poliglota de Alcala* (Madrid, 1917), and Helefe, *Op. cit.*, chap. 11.

9. To appreciate how strange this was at the time, Spain did not have as many Greek scholars as Italy did, refugees from the Fall of Constantinople. Ximenes had to import a Greek scholar from Crete to perform the editorial tasks on the Bible project.

10. This volume was printed in March to May 1515. I have examined the copy in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Lyons.

11. The prologue to the first volume of Old Testament text contains a letter of Cardinal Ximenes to Pope Leo X dealing with the importance of the Hebrew text, and of the Aramaic dictionary. The Aramaic paraphrase was included only for the Pentateuch, apparently because Ximenes thought that the other Targums contained too much non-Biblical material.

revenues of the archbishopric of Toledo.¹² We are told that Cardinal Ximenes attracted the best Hebrew scholars of the age.¹³ Actually, the three Hebraists involved were Alfonso, a medical doctor at Alcala, Pablo Nuñez Coronel and Alfonso de Zamora. Only the last-named ever published a book. Nothing is known about Alfonso de Alcala except that he converted from Judaism in 1492. Pablo Coronel, who became professor of Sacred Scriptures at Salamanca, was born in 1480 and also converted in 1492.¹⁴ Alfonso de Zamora, who did most of the work, especially compiling and editing all of the Aramaic texts and making their Latin translations, was a rabbinical student, aged eighteen, in 1492 in Zamora, a town renowned for its Jewish learning and for its resistance to Christian proselytizing.¹⁵ We are told that he converted only in 1506, and became professor of Hebrew at the new university at Alcala.¹⁶ What he was doing after 1492 is unknown. He may have gone to Portugal and then returned. However, by 1500 he was preparing Aramaic texts for Cardinal Ximenes.¹⁷ There are, in manuscript, quite a few Aramaic texts, translations of them, and texts of Jewish commentaries, that were prepared by Alfonso de Zamora up to the 1530s,¹⁸ which exist. While Cardinal Ximenes was alive, the texts state that they were prepared at his request. Apparently, they were made available to students at the University of Alcala.¹⁹

12. This is the estimate given by Tyrell, *Op. cit.*, p. 34, working from data given in Alvar Gomez de Castro, *Op. cit.*

13. So said Jerome Friedman in his *The Most Ancient Testimony. Sixteenth Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1983), p. 29.

14. For the little that is known about these Hebrew scholars, see the introduction by Federico Perez Castro to *El Manuscrito Apologético de Alfonso de Zamora* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto "Arias Montano," 1950); the articles "Alfonso de Alcala," "Alfonso de Zamora" and "Pablo Coronel" in the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada*, 4:612, 4:614, and 15:820; and articles "Paul Nuñez Coronel" and "Alfonso de Zamora" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. The *Enc. Univ. Ilustrada* reports that Alfonso de Alcala and Pablo Coronel were converted in 1492, and Alfonso de Zamora in 1506. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* article on Alfonso de Zamora also reports his baptism in 1506. In the Spanish article on Zamora, he is identified as a learned Spanish rabbi, *even though* he was only eighteen in 1492, and Coronel as "Doctor israelita," though he was just twelve in that same year.

The most recent review of Zamora's biography in Luis Diaz Merino, *Targum de Salmos. Edición Príncipe del Ms. Vila-Amil n. 5 de Alfonso de Zamora, Bibliotheca Hispana Biblica*, Vol. VIII (Madrid, 1982), pp. 5-8, states, without giving any evidence, that Alfonso de Zamora and his father, a rabbi, left Spain in 1492 and returned later and converted in 1506.

15. See article, "Zamora," by Haim Beinart, in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16:926.

16. All that is actually known about him appears in Perez Castro, *Op. cit.*, and Luis Diaz Merino, *Op. cit.* See n. 14.

17. The earliest manuscript by him, from July 1500, is a *Targum* (translation), in Aramaic, on the Prophets.

18. See the lists in Perez Castro, *Op. cit.*, pp. XXXII-LX, and in A. Neubauer, "Alfonso de Zamora," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, VII (1895): 398-417.

19. The manuscript in the University of Leiden in the Warner Collection 65, an Aramaic

In his preface to the Polyglot, the Cardinal said:

No translation can fully and exactly represent the sense of the original at least in that language in which our Saviour himself spoke . . . Every theologian should also be able to drink of that water which springeth up to eternal life, at the fountainhead itself. This is the reason, therefore, why we have ordered the Bible to be printed in the original language with different translations . . . To accomplish this task we have been obliged to have recourse to the knowledge of the most able philologists, and to make researches in every direction for the best and most ancient Hebrew and Greek Mss. Our subject is to revive the hitherto dormant study of the sacred Scriptures.²⁰

For about fifteen years the group of scholars working on the project were given the most generous support. Alfonso de Zamora reported that the Cardinal spent 4,000 gold ducats on just seven Hebrew manuscripts used in the project, and 50,000 gold ducats on the whole enterprise.²¹ From Alfonso's manuscripts it is evident that he had access to the whole range of Jewish literature, including all of the *Targumim* (translations), the Talmud, rabbinical commentaries, as well as the Cabala.²²

The Bible project was completed just a few months before Ximenes died in 1517, the work was completely printed in 1520 by imported printers²³ who had to cast special type fonts for the volumes, and was made available with Papal permission in 1522. Only 600 copies were published.

What was the point of such a vast expenditure of effort and resources? I submit that the emphasis on the Aramaic paraphrase, and the other Aramaic texts that Zamora prepared for the Cardinal, was to prepare for the Second Coming, to prepare for communication with Jesus in his own language when he would reappear! An elite core of theologians would be trained at the new and pure University of Alcala (which had four Hebrew professors out of a total of forty two, at a time when Hebrew studies had hardly begun anywhere else).²⁴ These

introduction to the *Targum* on Isaiah, explicitly says so.

20. Cardinal Ximenes, preface to the Polyglot Bible. I have used the translation offered by Lyell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 26-27, and have checked it against the original Latin.

21. Alvor Gomez de Castro got this information from Alfonso de Zamora himself. See Gomez de Castro, *Op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

22. He edited many ancient and medieval texts, and he cited from the whole range of Jewish materials in his *Sefer Hokhmat Elohim*.

23. Apparently German printers from Lyon, an early center of printing. Cf. Lyell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 45-49.

24. France did not create a chair of Hebrew until the 1530s. Louvain was looking for a Hebrew teacher in the 1520s. England did not begin Hebrew studies until the latter part of the century. The university of Alcala had a law school and a medical school. So, the allotment of four chairs for Hebrew studies is even more striking. On the allotment of chairs, see Lyell, *Op. cit.*, p. 25. On the founding of the university, see A. de la Torre, *La Universidad de Alcala . . . en Homenaje ofrecidos a Menendez Pidal*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Libreria y Casa Editorial Hernando, 1932), pp. 377ff.

reformed theologians would be ready to greet Jesus and to lead mankind into the Millennium. Nothing short of this can explain why such a vast undertaking, consuming so much of the resources of Church and State, was going on, supervised by the most powerful figure in the Kingdom, the Primate of Spain, while wars and all sorts of disorders were continually occurring. Another scholarly effort, publishing Aristotle in Greek, had to be suspended because all of the available money was being used on the Bible. The Cardinal was dashing off as statesman, warrior (at the capture of Oran), and theologian, while supervising the Bible project. In 1507, while giving close personal direction to the work on the Bible, Ximenes deposed the Grand Inquisitor, took on his function himself, and reformed the Inquisition procedures.

The fact that Ximenes personally emphasized the importance of Aramaic as the language of Jesus, and that he himself had immersed himself in that language well before he had become a public person, seems to indicate that he thought the ability to communicate in that language to be all-important. Alfonso de Zamora, no doubt at the Cardinal's behest, prepared a word book for proper pronunciation of Aramaic that is included in the Polyglot Bible, and, also, at the Cardinal's behest, edited many Aramaic texts, and wrote various things in Aramaic.²⁵

A further indication of Ximenes' Millenarianism is the role that he played when Archbishop Hernando de Talavera of Granada was accused and arrested by the Inquisition in 1506. Ximenes had had little part in Inquisitional affairs up to then, though he was a high governmental and Church official during the previous two decades. However, when Talavera, who was a close friend and who had played a most important role with him in converting the Moors, was accused (a) of being Jewish, (b) of being a Judaizer, and (c) of telling people that Elijah and Moses had already arrived,²⁶ Cardinal Ximenes seized control of the Inquisition, arranged for the arrest of the Inquisitor who had arrested Talavera, released his victims, and then had himself appointed Grand Inquisitor. As such, he prepared rules informing New Christians about what was expected of them in terms of acceptable behavior, and protected those who operated within those rules. Ximenes was obviously not concerned about the Jewish background of Talavera, nor of the Hebrew scholars at Alcala, nor of many of the humanist professors at the new university.²⁷ The joining of Jews and Christians was another

25. See list in the introduction to Perez Castro, *Op. cit.*, in the recent publication of Alfonso's *Targum of Solomon* edition, by Diaz Merino.

26. See Tarscio Herrero del Collado, "El proceso inquisitorial por delito de herejia contra Hernando de Talavera," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Juridicos* (Madrid, 1959), pp. 671-706.

27. The purity of blood statutes, first promulgated at Toledo in 1449, before Ximenes' time, were obviously not being applied. It was common knowledge that Alfonso de

important preparation for the Second Coming. The conversion of the Jews was supposed to be the penultimate development before the return of Jesus. Cardinal Ximenes was a philo-Semite towards Jewish Christians. He protected them and included them as fully equal partners in his preparations for the Millennium. On the other hand, he was quite fierce against Marranos, Jewish fake Christians, or backsliding Jewish Christians. He personally prevented Charles V from accepting 600,000 ducats from the Jews to call off the Inquisition in 1517,²⁸ and he personally prevented the establishment of a religious free-zone in Oran for Moors, lest the secret Jews of Spain would all move there.²⁹ The really converted Jews were part of the preparers for the Millennium. The fake converts served no good purpose, and deserved no pity or support. (Long after Ximenes had passed from the scene, Alfonso de Zamora seems to have indicated that he himself was a fake convert, and considered himself the last of the Jewish sages of Spain.³⁰)

Along with all of the above activities, Ximenes accepted as part of his charge the spreading of the Gospel to the New World, and the protection of the Indians from the rapacious Spaniards, so that they would freely convert. (This was the attitude that Archbishop Talavera had about the Moors of Granada.) Ximenes encouraged and supported the Millenarian humanism of Bartholome de Las Casas and of the spiritual Franciscans to establish the Kingdom of God on earth in New Spain. Ximenes also tried to oppose the secular government of the *conquistadores* that would seize the property of the Indians and enslave them, rather than allowing them the opportunity to hear the Gospel and freely accept the true faith. Like his fellow Franciscans in Mexico, he saw the proselytizing of the Indians as one of the most important and fruitful outcomes of the voyages of discovery. More souls could be saved in America than in Europe, more people prepared for the Millennium!³¹

In view of his role in the amazing developments in Iberia from 1492 onward, Ximenes himself was seen as a messianic figure, perhaps a forerunner of the Messiah, or the Elijah that, Talavera reported, was already here. In fact, Ximenes established just about all of the steps of the reformation before the Reformation, and died eight days after Luther posted up his theses. He reformed the Franciscans, he encouraged the publication of Scripture and inspirational devotional literature in Spanish, he created new purified institutions, like the University of Alcala and the reformed Inquisition, he converted the Moors and directed the activities to convert the Indians, and he had prepared the pub-

Zamora, Pablo Coronel, and Hernando de Talavera were of Jewish blood.

28. See Helefe, *Op. cit.*, p. 397.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 440-441.

30. This will be discussed later on in this paper.

31. See Phelan *Op. cit.*, chaps. i and ii.

lication of the Word of God in the most scholarly edition of the time, with the text given in the very language of Jesus, and with instructions on how to speak that language. He died knowing that the Polyglot Bible had been completed and all was ready for the Second Coming and the Millennium.

We also know that Iberian Jews in Spain before 1492, and outside of Iberia thereafter, developed fervent Messianic expectations. Don Isaac Abarbanel, who must have known Ximines when they were both at the Court until August of 1492, was expressing his Messianic views in Naples at the same time as Savonarola in Italy and Ximines in Spain.³² Ximines seems to have been influenced by Savonarola, at least to the extent of trying to make his prophetic writings known in Spain.³³ And it has been suggested that Abarbanel might also have been influenced by some of Savonarola's prophecies.³⁴ Later on, in the 1520s, a new wave of Jewish Messianic fervor came into Italy with David Reubeni, and then carried over into Iberia, when the secretary of the King of Portugal, Solomon Molcho, joined Reubeni in announcing the coming of the Messiah. (And it was the King of Spain, Charles V, who ended their Messianic movement by executing them.)³⁵

In the light of all of this, I think that, in Spain, from 1492 onward, there was a discernable Christian Jewish view. Ximines represents a kind of Jewish Christianity that is grounded in direct contact with the Jewish world of the time of Jesus through the study of Hebrew and Aramaic texts.

Archbishop Talavera, on the other hand, represents a kind of Christian Jewish view. There does not seem to be any doubt, except on the part of Lucero, the Inquisitor whom Ximines deposed and arrested, that Talavera was a sincere Christian.³⁶ And everyone knew that he was considered one of the most saintly persons in Iberia. His view, that conversion to Christianity should take place only by love and not force, was counter to the mainstream of forced conversion as the way to bring about the Millennium. This seems to have been one of the reasons for claiming that he was a Judaizer. He was also accused of running a synagogue in his home.³⁷ Talavera's lack of practical accom-

32. See Benjamin Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Philosopher* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), pp. 249-251.

33. Bataillon, *Op. cit.*, p. 53 and 62.

34. Netanyahu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 249-251.

35. See the articles on Reubeni and Molcho in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

36. He was considered *the* most pious Christian of the time. See Herrero, *Op. cit.*, and Jocelyn N. Hilgarth, "The Reaction of Catholic Intellectuals to the Jewish Presence in Spain During the Reign of the Catholic Monarchs," *Proceedings of the International Congress, The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, held in Jerusalem, Jan 6-10, 1992, forthcoming. Salvador de Madariaga, in his *Christopher Columbus* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), chap. xiii, presents Talavera as a saint.

37. Herrero, *Op. cit.*, pp. 690-691.

plishment in converting by love led Ximines to use various forms of trickery (causing them to rebel and thereby forfeit their treaty guaranty of religious freedom) in order to bring about massive conversions of Moors and, finally, the banning of Islam in Granada.³⁸

Talavera seems to have envisaged a world of morally good people of various religious persuasions, who would all join together, as Christians, by love and conviction. Talavera also seems to have believed that the actual historical unfolding of the Messianic drama was beginning to take place in Spain after 1492. If he really thought that Elijah and Moses were on the scene, the Messiah himself would soon arrive. We do not know whom he identified as Elijah or Moses, but one serious candidate, or self-proclaimed candidate, was his friend, Christopher Columbus. Talavera died in 1507 shortly after being saved from the clutches of the Inquisition by Ximines, so he never saw what occurred thereafter.

For the last four centuries, Columbus, the perpetual man of mystery, has been accused or recognized as a New Christian, a Marrano.³⁹ He was involved with important *conversos* and unconverted Jews in Portugal and Spain. His mistress, Beatrice, the mother of his son, Ferdinand, was Jewish. There is a fair amount of evidence that he saw himself in the Messianic tradition and referred to himself as being from the tree of Jesse. He must have been involved with Don Isaac Abravanel up to 1492, since, for years they were together in the Portuguese Court, and they both fled at the same time to the Spanish Court, where they stayed until August 1492, when Abravanel went to Naples and, on the next day, Columbus started on his fateful voyage to America. Columbus had been pressing the possibilities of great numbers of conversions as a reason to allow his proposed voyage. His financial backers were the Jewish and New Christian treasurers of Ferdinand and Isabella, so one wonders why they were so supportive that they actually financed the first voyage, and prevented Columbus from running away in pique when Isabella balked at his preposterous terms.⁴⁰ When Columbus returned to Lisbon after the first voyage, he sent to the Court two letters describing his discoveries, one for Isabella to read and the other for her New Christian treasurer. They contain the same information about the wonders that he found, but the letter for Isabella ends by saying that the voyage was possible only through the help of our Lord and

38. See Helefe, *Op. cit.*, chap. vii.

39. See Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, and Cecil Roth, "Who Was Columbus?" *Menorah Journal*, XVIII (1940) and Simon Wiesenthal, *Sails of Hope: The Secret Mission of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Macmillan, 1973). Madariaga's work is the most thorough attempt to put together all of the evidence indicating that Columbus was a New Christian. The French edition, *Christophe Colomb* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1952), tried to answer some of the criticisms offered by scholars who doubted that Columbus was Jewish or a New Christian.

40. See Wiesenthal, *Op. cit.*, and Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, on the roles of Gabriel Sanchez and Luis de Santangel in financing Columbus' first voyage.

Savior Jesus Christ. The other letter ends saying that this voyage was possible only because God helps those who keep his Holy Laws. Columbus may have told the recipients only what they would believe, or he may have told them what he believed.

Columbus was filled with a mix of Jewish and Christian prophetic ideas. He read Josephus and Jewish Apocryphal books and the Biblical commentaries of Nicholas of Lyra, supposedly a converted Jew who introduced Jewish readings of Scripture into Christian exegetical studies. He was steeped in Joachimite prophecies, including the one that the redeemer would come from Spain. On the first voyage he took as his interpreter one Luis de Torres (a Jew who was converted on the gangplank), because he knew Hebrew and some Arabic.⁴¹ Significantly, he did not take a priest. So, one wonders where he really thought he was going and whom he expected to find there.

In later statements, especially in his letter about the fourth voyage and his *Book of Prophecies*, he saw an intimate connection between what he was proposing to do in America and the liberation and rebuilding of Jerusalem, the “nipple” of the universe. The rulers and Cardinal Ximenes did not want Columbus to make still another voyage because they thought he had made a mess out of administering the places in the Indies where Spaniards had gone, and that he had allowed activities that were counter-productive to converting the Indians. (It is also believed that the rulers did not want Columbus to get any more loot out of his discoveries.⁴²) To convince Ferdinand and Isabella that he should make another voyage, he wrote them an amazing letter, and drafted the *Book of Prophecies*. He told them of Joachim’s prophecy. He told them that he was the one who would liberate Jerusalem, and rebuild the Temple with gold from the New World. He claimed that he had found a gold source which was the very same one that Solomon had originally used, and he had figured out from Josephus exactly how much gold would be needed.⁴³ He would also bring all peoples of the world together. He declared that the Holy Spirit acts equally in Jews, Christians, Moslems, and others, and that they would join together through love. He also told them that it was his job to fulfill all of the remaining Scriptural prophecies before the end of days, which, he calculated, would be in 155 years hence, in 1656.⁴⁴

41. Wiesenthal, *Op. cit.*, pp. 171-174, suggests that Columbus chose Luis de Torres as the translator because he expected to find a Hebrew-speaking kingdom in the Orient. Marco Polo had described the Jews of India as speaking their own language, and Columbus carefully studied and annotated Marco Polo’s text.

42. See Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, pp. 355-357.

43. John Leddy Phelan, *Op. cit.*, pp. 19-23, and Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, trans. and ed. R.H. Major (London: Hakluyt Society, 1847), pp. 196-98.

44. Phelan, *Op. cit.*, p. 21, and Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, p. 361. It is strange that Columbus’ date for the end of the world is the same as that worked out, on totally different grounds,

Columbus knew Talavera from the days when the latter was the Queen's confessor. Talavera was also chairman of the commission appointed by the Queen to evaluate Columbus' proposed scheme. They had several discussions before the first voyage.⁴⁵ One finds that Columbus held, at least in theory, Talavera's view, that conversion should be only by love, not by force, and that the Holy Spirit operates co-equally in all men, Jews, Moors, and Christians alike!⁴⁶

Some of the rhetoric in the *Book of Prophecies*, written to convince Isabella of the need for the fourth voyage, resonates with the idea that the author, Columbus himself, is Elijah or Moses,⁴⁷ and that it is his job to fulfill as many prophecies as possible to prepare for the Millennial Kingdom.

When Columbus was dying, and knew he was dying, in 1506, he took on the habit of a spiritual Franciscan⁴⁸ and called in a notary to add some codicils to his will. One of these says that he is leaving a substantial sum of money to the Jew who stands by the gate of the ghetto in Lisbon, "or to any other one [i.e., Jew] that a priest may designate."⁴⁹ This peculiar bequest is even more peculiar when one realizes that the ghetto in Lisbon had been previously destroyed, and that Columbus knew this. Then the bequest is to a mythical character like the Flying Dutchman. What is the point?

One of Columbus' friends and backers, who played a crucial role in financing and backing the first voyage, Luis de Santangel, had been arrested and charged by the Inquisition with Judaizing *because he gave alms to a Jew*. Santangel's case was so important that King Ferdinand himself had to rescue the financier from the Inquisition, and give him

by Scottish and English Millenarians in the early 17th century.

45. Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, pp. 149-152, 154-155. Columbus was also very close to Bishop Deza, who became Torquemada's successor as Grand Inquisitor, and then was deposed by Ximenes. Deza, like Talavera, was of Jewish origins. It is Deza who got the rulers to give Columbus financial support during his years at the court, and who met with him just before the first voyage.

46. Madariaga contends that Talavera and Columbus were opposite kinds of personalities: the first was a saint figure and the other a hero figure. See *Op. cit.*, chap. xiii, "The Saint and the Hero."

47. It is interesting that the Franciscans in America consider Cortes the Moses of the New World. See Phelan, *Op. cit.*, chap. iii.

48. Phelan, *Op. cit.*, p. 19, citing the testimony of Columbus' son.

49. Cristobal Colón, "Testamento y Codicillo," in *Textos y documentos completos Relaciones de viajes, cartas y memoriales*, ed. Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza Editorial), p. 336. "A un judío que morava a la puerta de la judería en Lisbóa, a quién mandare un sacerdote el valor de medio marco de plata."

See Henry Harisse, *Christophe Colomb, Son Origine, Sa Vie. Ses Voyages. Sa Famille & Ses Descendants*. Tome II (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), pp. 138 and 151 for a description of the careful preparation of the writing of the last codicils. The others are gifts to actual people rather than an amorphous Jew. Harisse just says that the codicils make certain gifts "très curieux mais de peu d'importance."

protection from then on.⁵⁰ Santangel's activity was taken by Inquisitional authorities as *prima facie* evidence of his being a Jew, or a Judaizer. Columbus has his codicil so worded that both he *and* the Church commit the crime. His last declaration to the world is that he is a Jew or a Judaizer and, ironically, he makes the Church equally involved.

What is the point of the death-bed confession and manoeuvre, and the symbolic dying as a spiritual Franciscan, the order led by cardinal Ximenes? I submit that these acts were intended as a way of indicating Columbus' personal state of affairs, without legally barring his progeny from inheriting his part of the loot from the Indies or giving up his title. What he did is sufficiently devious to be open to many interpretations. And, I submit, it may be a death-bed way of declaring solidarity with Talavera, who was being accused of being Jewish and being a Judaizer, and joining the Jewish Christianity of Ximenes and his circle. Columbus seems to have been torn between sympathy for Judaism and for Jewish Christianity, the state of the *conversos* who were genuine converts.⁵¹

Some years ago, in a cabinet of Columbiana that had been collected in Genoa long after the Admiral's death (it was deposited in Genoa in 1670), a woman in St. Louis found a manuscript Hebrew Bible with commentaries in the same language and a scroll of part of the Bible in Hebrew, probably for use in a synagogue. These appear with some documents of Columbus. An inventory of them was made by a French professor, Silvestre de Saci, who was sent to Genoa in 1805-6 by Napoleon to make a list of everything that was worth looting and carting back to Paris.⁵² de Saci filed his report right away, and the Columbiana was taken back to France.⁵³ The letters from the collection were published by Harris. The Bible and Torah scroll are not noted as being anywhere, except that the physical materials brought back by de Saci, other than the letters, were turned over to the Ministry of the Marine. So, perhaps, these items can be located and identified.

When I first heard of this in St. Louis many years ago, I thought that here was decisive evidence that Columbus was Jewish, since so much effort had been made by Inquisition authorities in the 16th century to root out Hebrew materials in private hands. But this was later on.

50. Luis de Santangel, who put up the actual funds for the first voyage, was related to another Luis de Santangel who successfully plotted to kill the first Grand Inquisitor, and who was arrested and put to death. See Wiesenthal, *Op. cit.*, pp. 165-168 and Madariaga, *Op. cit.*, pp. 177-178 for details.

51. This is one of the central themes of Madariaga, *Op. cit.*

52. A woman, Mrs. Robinson, wrote this up in the *St. Louis Jewish Light* some years ago.

53. Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Saci, *Extrait de rapport lu à la Classe d'histoire et de littérature ancienne de l'Institut de France, par M. Silvestre de Saci, sur les recherches faites dans les archives de Genes en execution des ordres du Gouvernement*, n.p., 1807. The report was reprinted in 1861 in a collection of his works, *Melanges de littérature orientale* (Paris: E. Ducrocq, 1861). Silvestre de Saci was learned in Oriental languages, and was a renowned semiticist, so he definitely would have known what the objects were that he was describing.

In the days of Cardinal Ximenes, the Hebrew Bible and a Hebrew and Aramaic grammar and dictionary were made available to the public, at least to 600 members of the public. Prior to the publication of the Polyglot, the Italian Hebrew Bible was available, at least to people connected with the Bible project, and the University of Alcalá. Cardinal Ximenes spent a fortune to get seven Hebrew manuscripts, Torah scrolls.⁵⁴ Presumably, others could be bought, too, under the protection of the Cardinal, or through members of his Hebrew *equipe*.

The Polyglot Bible appeared only fifteen years after the demise of Columbus. Most of the copies of volume V, the Hebrew and Aramaic grammars and dictionaries, were detached from the sets of the Bible proper, and seem to have been much sought after, presumably by persons wishing to have legitimate access to the Holy Tongue. If Columbus had contacts with the circle around Ximenes (whom he must have known, since he was the Queen's confessor at the time of the first voyage, and was the principal royal adviser and regent from 1492-1506, when Columbus died), then he could have come by these materials through them. In the manuscripts prepared by Alfonso de Zamora there are some manuscript Bibles. The ones we know about were deposited in the libraries at Alcalá and Salamanca, presumably for the use of students.⁵⁵ Other people have been able to get their own copies. So, I think that if Columbus actually had these Hebrew materials, it may show that he had contacts with the Hebrew scholars around Cardinal Ximenes. And, if so, one can wonder, why, and what role these contacts may have had in his own speculations. And, one can wonder if Columbus knew Hebrew, and if so, when and where he had learned it. (The rest of his knowledge of Judaica seems to come from Latin texts or translations.)

Barnard McGinn has pointed out that Columbus has to be seen in the line of Messianic speculators in the late 15th century as well as in the history of navigators of the period.⁵⁶ Given that his first voyage is one of the three things that made 1492 the *annus mirabilis*, it probably makes sense in the same context as the Conquest of Granada, and the Expulsion of the Jews, vital antecedents to the Millennium. Like Talavera, Columbus seems to have had a Jewish Christian view of what he was doing, infused with Joachimite and Jewish expectations of the imminent end of the world.⁵⁷

54. Gomez de Castro, *Op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

55. See the list of such manuscript texts in Perez Castro, *Op. cit.*

56. Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End. Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia, 1979), p. 284. "Columbus thought that his own divinely inspired mission to open up a new path in Asia, coupled with a Spanish ruler's conquest of Jerusalem, would herald an age of universal conversion that would precede the end of the world."

57. McGinn, *Op. cit.*, Loc. cit.: "He was the first, but by no means the last, to interpret the discovery of the New World in the light of an optimistic Joachimite vision of the dawn

In terms of examining people's perspectives as Jewish-Christian or Christian-Jewish, what about Alfonso de Zamora, who devoted about fifty years to editing Aramaic and Hebrew texts, and teaching the languages and the materials? He was a rabbinical student in 1492. There is evidence that his father was a rabbi, who also stayed in Spain. He was a younger classmate of Rabbi Isaac Arama, who left in 1492 and became one of the fiercest opponents of Christian theology, writing from Salonica. We do not know if Alfonso wandered back and forth between Spain and Portugal, trying to decide which world to be in. We do know that, by 1500, he was working for Cardinal Ximenes, editing Aramaic *Targum* texts. We are told that he converted in 1506, but not why or wherefore.⁵⁸ In all of the materials that he edited for Ximenes and, later, for his successor, Archbishop Fonseca, he dated his work according to the Christian calendar, with the date followed at first by phrases like "in the era of our Savior, King Messiah."⁵⁹ This later got reduced to "in the era of our salvation,"⁶⁰ and, finally, to "according to the Lord." The first datings indicate a way of overdoing the need to show that he accepted Christianity, but gradually it was toned down.

In the large amount of materials that Alfonso de Zamora prepared, there are only two items which are put forth as Christian: one, a letter to the Jews of Rome, in the second edition of his Hebrew grammar in Latin (published independently of the Polyglot) in 1520;⁶¹ and the other, an unpublished Hebrew work, *Sefer Hokhmat Elohim*, of 1532, which claims that it will help bring about the conversion of the Jews. Both of these items were done after Cardinal Ximenes had died and was no longer Alfonso's protector. Neither is argumentative. Both just compile Jewish texts from Scripture, the Talmud, Midrashim, and medieval writings on the topics in dispute between Jews and Christians, like the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Virgin Birth, without drawing any conclusions. Were it not for the brief prefatory remarks, one would not know that these are Christian and not Jewish apologetic works. In any case, the first, the Hebrew grammar, was very rare, and not discussed by anyone as a conversionist work. The second does not seem to have been known, and was printed only in 1950.⁶²

of a more perfect age." See also Phelan, *Op. cit.*, chap. ii, "The Apocalypse in the Age of Discovery."

58. According to the Expulsion order of 1492, anyone who harbored an unconverted Jew after August 1492 was subject to the death penalty!

59. In Perez Castro's lists of Alfonso's publications, this appears as the date on the *Targum* on the Prophets, dated 27 July 1500, prepared for Cardinal Ximenes.

60. This is the phrase used in his writings in the 1530s. See Perez Castro's list.

61. This is the only portion of the content in Vol. V of the Polyglot that was published separately.

62. Published by Frederico Perez Castro as *El Manuscrito apologetico de Alfonso de Zamora, traduccion y estudio del Sefer Hokhmat Elohim* (Madrid: Consejo superior de Investigaciones Cientificas Institue "Arias Montano," 1950).

What makes the case of Alfonso de Zamora most intriguing is a letter of 1544, the last of his writing that we know of. In a Hebrew text purporting to be a letter of a Professor Zornosa to Pope Paul III, dated 31 March 1544, era of our salvation,⁶³ a passage appears at the end which says that it is by Alfonso de Zamora, who teaches Hebrew at Alcalá, who is age 70, and who has not yet seen happiness. He also says that he pointed this letter [with Hebrew vowel marks] for people of limited knowledge [presumably of the Hebrew language]. Then he states that "I am the only Jewish wise man left in Spain since the Expulsion of the Jews from Castile, which took place in 5232 of the era of the Creation of the world as the Jews compute it." Alfonso prays for the Jews in the rest of the world, and for their sins. "*Fin Gloria Dios. Finis Laus Deo.*" Then he adds that all letters which have the sign -v- will be recognized by the reader, and will not be confused with others that they see.⁶⁴

The concluding passage of the letter that I have noted has nothing to do with the rest of its contents, and appears to have been added by Alfonso de Zamora. Why? It would be pointless to communicate in Hebrew, even with points, to the Pope, when Alfonso knew and wrote in Latin and Spanish. Further, the Pope would probably not take kindly to Alfonso's news that he was the last of the Spanish Jewish wise men, and was concerned about the Jews outside of Spain. And, most curious of all, this is the only document known in which Alfonso gave the date in the Jewish calendar.

An explanation of all of this emerges when one considers the provenance of the known text. It is not from the Vatican files (which do not have a copy of the letter in any language),⁶⁵ but, rather, from a document in the University of Leiden Library, Warner 65.⁶⁶ The Warner collection of Hebraica was assembled by a Dutch official in the Levant in the mid-17th century, and then donated to his university, Leiden. Most of the items were purchased in Constantinople.⁶⁷ Warner 65 also contains an introduction in Aramaic to the *Targum of Isaiah* by Alfonso de Zamora, which was begun at Salamanca on Feb. 28,

63. The letter is printed in Hebrew in A. Neubauer, "Alfonso de Zamora," pp. 412-415. A Spanish translation is given by Perez Castro. I should like to thank my colleague, Professor Wolf Leslau of UCLA, who has carefully gone over the Hebrew and the Spanish texts and assured me that the texts are identical. I have used the Spanish translation in this study.

64. p. 414.

65. I am grateful to Miriam Silvera of Rome for checking on this for me. The alleged correspondent, Prof. Zornosa, is also unknown.

66. Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogus Codicul Hebraeorum Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* (Leiden: Brill, 1858), where Warner 65 is described.

67. The history of the Warner collection appears in Albert van der Heide, *Hebrew Manuscripts of Leiden University Library* (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1977), pp. 10-15.

1532.⁶⁸ It further says that it was written to be deposited in the library for the use of scholars.

If the Hebrew letter of 1544 to the Pope and the Aramaic introduction to the *Targum* were obtained by Warner in Constantinople, they, like most of his collection, came from either Jewish or Karaite sources there. This would seem to indicate that these items were sent from Spain to some Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire. Such an hypothesis would explain the passage in the 1544 letter, and the inclusion of Alfonso de Zamora's personal sign. If this was the case, then, near the end of his life he was notifying some brethren, whose Hebrew might not be of the best, that he was the last of the Jewish sages of Spain, and that he was still Jewish in some important ways.

What then, is one to make of his career, and possibly that of his close collaborator, Pablo Nuñez Coronel? Were they Marranos, fake Christians and secret Jews, whose inner life escaped the scrutiny of Cardinal Ximenes, an expert on distinguishing New Christians from fake Christians, and who worked closely with them on the Polyglot Bible project? Why would they take on such high profile jobs as editors of the Polyglot Bible and professors at Alcalá and Salamanca?

One possible answer is that they were trying to keep Jewish knowledge alive in Spain, and were making available to the New Christians the Jewish answers to Christianity. This would fit in with two matters. The first, is that Alfonso de Zamora managed to compile in manuscripts available to students a vast compendium of Jewish texts, from Talmudic days onward, concerning the items in the Old Testament that Christians took as proof-texts of Christianity. The fact that Alfonso could produce these compendia meant that he had access to a great library of Jewish sources at Alcalá, either his own, or the university's. And, it is interesting that there are what may be occasional slips, as when Alfonso refers to the Talmudic rabbis as "our masters" or refers to the Bible as consisting of twenty-four books, i.e., the Bible as just the Old Testament.⁶⁹

The second matter is that Alfonso de Zamora and Pablo Nuñez Coronel were the teachers of just about all of the Spanish Erasmians, those who were accused of anti-Trinitarianism, and persecuted in the 1520s. Many of these people were of *converso* origin.⁷⁰ Zamora and Coronel did not seem to take part in the public fight between the Erasmians

68. In Neubauer, *Op. cit.*, p. 410, it is stated that this is dated from Salonica, but the Hebrew says Salamanca (and so does the Steinschneider entry on this, *Op. cit.*, p. 281). If the former were the case, this might be very exiting as an indication of contact between the active Spanish Jewish community in Greece and the *converso* one in Spain. This manuscript, part of Warner 65 in Leiden, does, interestingly enough, come from Constantinople in the 17th century.

69. Perez Castro's edition of the text, p. 1 and p. 224.

70. See Bataillon, *Op. cit.*, chap. 3, and R.H. Popkin, "Marranos, New Christians and the Beginnings of Modern Anti-Trinitarianism," *International Congress on the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, Jerusalem 6-10, 1992, forthcoming.

and their opponents. The issues were about what the New Testament said. Only one document survives, a text of David Kimchi's grammar that Zamora prepared for one of the leading opponents of the Erasmians, the British ambassador, Edward Lee, right after the Valladolid debate of 1527, prepared at the suggestion of Coronel.⁷¹

We know nothing at all about why these Hebrew scholars decided to stay in Spain in 1492. Coronel was just twelve at the time, so his family probably made the decision. There is one indication that Zamora's father, a rabbi, also stayed. How the young Jewish scholars moved into the Millenarian world of Ximines is also unknown. He needed their expertise if he was going to produce the Bible in the original language and in the language of Jesus. But he also knew that Spain was full of fake converts. So, he must have had good reason to believe that Coronel, after 1492, and Zamora, after 1506, were New Christians. They may have been swept up in his enthusiasm, and seen the projects of the Polyglot Bible and the new university of Alcala as creating a world in which they could be Jewish Christians, using their Jewish knowledge in a Christian context.

There are hints in Zamora's writings, all after Ximines had died, that he was unhappy, that he had enemies, etc.⁷² Maybe he gradually became disillusioned with the Jewish-Christian Millenarian program of Ximines, and that was still carried on by his successor, Fonseca. By 1544, the Inquisitional purges and the repression of Hebrew studies may have destroyed all illusions. One does not know why he did not flee to a real Jewish community. A possibility, in keeping with this paper, is that he believed in a Millenarian-Messianic theory that was linked to Spanish developments. As this dissolved, he was just left with sadness and sympathy for the Jews of the Diaspora. He reached out in the one way he found, by inserting his message in a Hebrew copy of an alleged letter to the Pope.

Zamora's testament, in the 1544 letter, may be the end of one line of Spanish Millenarianism. Another related form was emerging at the same time, and sometimes in the same people, in the religious mysticism that avoided any commitment to the Divinity of Jesus, or to the institutional church, and saw religious fulfillment in some sort of imminent culmination of Divine history. The internalization of religion based on a pure heart and simple reading of Scripture (in Spanish) was offered early in the 16th century by Isabel de la Cruz and Ruiz de Alcazar, both New Christians.⁷³ Their spiritualism without formal content was

71. Cf. Neubauer, *Op. cit.*, p. 409, and Perez Castro, p. lvii.

72. A manuscript postscript in a 1481 Bible dated March 1520 ends saying that "I, Alfonso de Zamora, am in poor spirits, have tired eyes, am without friends, and am surrounded by enemies who consume my spirits." Perez Castro, *Op. cit.*, p. xl, and Neubauer, *Op. cit.*, p. 407.

73. Jose C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdes and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation*

taken over by Juan de Valdes, a student of Alfonso de Zamora, and developed into a radical, non-Trinitarian view.⁷⁴ It also was followed by the passionate mysticism of Santa Teresa of Avila, Luis de Leon, and San Juan de la Cruz. The almost non-Christian form of the spiritualism of Gregorio Lopez⁷⁵ and of Miguel de Molinos may be the end of this line of development, a pure spiritual religion needing neither a Church nor a credal formulation.

Spanish Millenarianism, in either the form of the Hebraic-Aramaic preparation for greeting the soon-to-return Jesus, or in its form of purified religion as developed by Ximines and by the mystics, was a most powerful force in Iberia from 1492 onward. It was a political Millenarian movement, in which governmental and Church power was used to complete all of the preparations for the Millennium in Spain and in the overseas empire. Under Ximines, Spain went through most of the steps that the Reformation was to take in the generation after his death.⁷⁶ The political force of the Millenarian movement was sapped by the Inquisition, especially after Philip II took control. New Christians were eliminated from offices of Church and State, and mystics were treated as potential heretics. Iberia, as it became a bastion of institutional Catholicism, ceased to be in the forefront of Millenarian activity. The focus then moved to Reformation countries, especially Scotland, England, The Netherlands, and Sweden. They saw as a sign of their place as an elected nation that they had expelled the power of Spain and its Inquisition and its authoritarian Church, now recognized by them as the Church of the Anti-Christ rather than of Jesus. They tried to create Jewish Christianity based on the Jewish conception of the role of the coming political Messiah and Messianic age, and they tried to create Christian Jews, that is, Jews who would accept the spirit of Christianity.

The northern Protestant Millenarians saw Hebrew studies (but not Aramaic) as a central part of their preparation for the Millennium. They also saw the conversion of the Jews as a crucial step (at least in a token form), but not to be done as had occurred in Spain. There is constant comment that the Spaniards had botched the conversion process by using force, and by creating fake Christians instead of Jewish Christians. There is also another serious difference — Spain had a large Jewish population in the 15th century, whereas Scotland, England and Sweden had no Jews when they entered their Millenarian phase, and

(Geneva: Droz, 1970), pp. 60-61; and Bataillon, *Op. cit.*, pp. 193-196. Ximines encouraged this kind of pure personal religious experimentation.

74. Nieto, *Op. cit.*, and Popkin, "Marranos, New Christians and the Beginnings of Modern Anti-Trinitarianism."

75. Cf. *The Life of Gregory Lopez, A Hermit in America* (Boston: Henry V. Degen, 1856).

76. Only George Williams, in *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), seems to have noticed that Spain had the Reformation before it occurred elsewhere in Europe.

had to look for them in the New World among the Indians, or in The Netherlands. Holland had some Jews, but Dutch tolerance limited conversionist activity, basically turning it over to God and not to man. The northern Protestant countries saw their glorious victorious history as an indication that they were the locus of God's plans for the Millennium, but they were not in the same position to act as Spain had been. They also were now part of a post-Reformation world, in which they were defenders of the pure Christian Church against Rome and its Spanish ally. They were leaders of a civil war within Christendom, rather than leaders of Christendom. And the Counter-Reform monarch, Philip II, had claimed that "all the heresies which have occurred in Germany and France have been sown by descendants of Jews, as we have seen and still see daily in Spain." Ironically, the fanaticism and rigidity of Spanish Catholicism contributed to the strength and spread of Protestant ideas and institutions in other parts of Europe and, ultimately, around the world.

But, in Iberia from 1492 onward, and in northern Protestant Europe from about 1600 onward, Millenarianism was a most powerful force, and much of the political and intellectual developments in these periods can be best understood in terms of how this force was acted upon. Millenarianism in both the Catholic and Protestant world was a mix of Jewish Christianity and Christian Judaism. The mixing of these views had profound, creative and even explosive effects in modern European and American history. Understanding our world and how it emerged from the Middle Ages requires that we take seriously its roots in the attempted fusions of Jewish Christianity and Christian Judaism. Perhaps in our considerations of the lessons of 1492, we will realize the profound force for good and ill of Millenarianism and Messianism then, and later on, in modern history.

An Introduction to the Economic History of the Iberian Diaspora in the Mediterranean

BENJAMIN RAVID

THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM SPAIN in 1492 and the subsequent forced conversion in 1497 of the Jews residing in Portugal, including many exiles from Spain who had sought refuge there, marked, to all intents and purposes, the end of over a millenium of continual Jewish residence in Western Europe. These traumatic events led to the emergence of the Iberian diaspora,¹ and transformed many aspects of Jewish life. Indeed, according to some historians, the Iberian diaspora ultimately produced the first "modern Jews." This article will serve as a general introduction to the economic history of that Iberian diaspora in the Mediterranean, and thus elucidate the external factors that enabled it to come into being and flourish.

I

At the outset, it is desirable to clarify a few geographic-ethnic terms, which are not always understood as well as they should be, and, consequently, cause some confusion not only in our understanding of the past but, also, in connection with present-day matters.

European Jewry in the Middle Ages was divided into two main groups: Sephardi and Ashkenazi. The word Sephardi is the adjectival form of the noun *Sepharad*, one of the medieval Hebrew names for Spain, while Ashkenazi is similarly derived from the Hebrew word *Ashkenaz* for Germany, or more accurately — since Germany really did not exist as a unified political entity until 1871 — the Germanic lands. Many of the Jews of the Germanic lands migrated eastward to Poland, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, taking with them their religious customs and their language, the vernacular of the Germanic lands which they wrote in the Hebrew alphabet and became

1. In view of the mobility of New Christians between Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term "Iberian diaspora" seems more appropriate in many respects than "Spanish diaspora."

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known as Yiddish or Judeo-German, parallel to Ladino or Judeo-Spanish, the language of the Spanish exiles of 1492.

While the majority of European Jewry was either Sephardi or Ashkenazi, there were also additional Jewish groups with their own unique Jewish ethnic identity. Foremost among these were the Jews of the Italian peninsula,² whose origins predate the arrival of the captives brought from the Land of Israel to Rome by Pompey after his capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, and whose numbers subsequently were increased by Titus after his destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. These Italian Jews evolved their own religious rituals and customs, their own languages, which constitute a blend of Hebrew and the local Italian dialect, and their own pronunciation of Hebrew, which differed from that of both the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim. Furthermore, in the Balkans there were Jews living in what had once been a part of the Roman Empire, then of the Byzantine Empire, and which eventually became a part of the Ottoman Empire. These indigenous Jews came to be known as Romaniote Jews, from the word Romania referring to the Byzantine Empire, and they likewise followed their own customs and traditions, and their native vernacular was Greek.

Moving to the world of Islam, one encounters several other categories of Jews. They include those of North Africa (the *Maghreb* or West, from the Arabic cognate of the Hebrew word *ma'arav*), of the eastern Mediterranean, of Yemen, and of what is today known as Iraq and Iran. All these Jews were certainly neither Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Italiani or Romaniote, but, rather, constituted further strands in the multifaceted fabric of world Jewry.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, along with general economic development and intensified European exploration of the Near and Middle East, stimulated Jewish mobility, which resulted in the increased presence of Jews of various origins in the same area, and their intermingling. Therefore, it is important that the initial distinctions be kept clear, and it be recognized that all non-Ashkenazi Jews cannot simply be designated as Sephardi Jews. Similarly, it must be insisted that Sephardi Jews, Jews of North African, Balkan, or Eastern Mediterranean origin, and so-called "oriental" Jews of Yemen, Iraq and Iran, are all distinct categories. No doubt a major cause of the lack of clarity today lies in the fact that many Sephardi Jews settled in the Ottoman Empire and, accordingly, Sephardi and "oriental" erroneously became synonymous from a very undiscerning Eurocentric perspective. If one does, indeed, insist on an all-inclusive term for those Jewries, a somewhat more accurate designation might be the Jews of the Moslem (not

2. The term "Italian peninsula" is more appropriate in many contexts than the more frequently encountered "Italy," since, from the time of the break-up of the Roman Empire until the middle of the nineteenth century, Italy did not really exist as a unified political entity.

Arab, if one wishes to include Iran) world. A distinction between Jews of Christian Europe and those of the Moslem world might assist in clarifying some religious, social and political issues in modern Jewish history, especially in the State of Israel, more than the conventional designations of Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Oriental.

II

Historians have long debated whether major anti-Jewish developments, and especially pre-modern expulsions, were motivated primarily by religious considerations or, rather, by socio-economic ones, with ethnic-nationalistic overtones possible in either case. For example, the question of the motives behind the Spanish Inquisition is currently a matter of keen discussion. However, it is the consensus that the expulsion of the Jews from Spain was motivated by religious considerations, without any concern for its economic consequences, which may not have been as extensive as previously assumed. In the past it was suggested that Spain, as a country, eventually was harmed because it did not have the Jews in its midst to help it deal with the colonies and wealth that it acquired in the sixteenth century and, had they not been expelled, it might have remained a major power for a longer time. However, some historians are now proposing that by the time of the expulsion, the Jews as a group had been considerably impoverished, and, consequently, the edict of expulsion did not have so serious a negative impact on the Spanish economy, especially since many had converted already prior to 1492, as well as in 1492 itself — although, on the other hand, as we shall see, Jewish emigres from Spain did confer considerable benefits on less developed economies elsewhere.

Indeed, especially after the widespread and serious pogroms of 1391, and continuing in the following decades as a result of the considerable pressures exerted upon the Jews, a significant number of them converted in Castile and Aragon — which were to come under the same rule, paving the way for the creation of a united Spain, as a result of the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469. Some did so willingly, while others did so more hesitatingly, under duress. All those who converted to Christianity, and by extension their descendents, are known as *conversos* or New Christians. While many of these New Christians came to terms with their new religion, for others it was only a veneer, as in their hearts they remained loyal to Judaism and in practice observed it to differing extents and in differing manners. Only those New Christians who retained their loyalty to Judaism should properly be called Marranos — or better and less ambiguously, crypto-Jews. To Old Christians, this phenomenon of judaizing New Christians was unacceptable, for while it was permitted to be a Jew — for Jews were considered to be infidels who were to be tolerated, in the hope

that they would convert to Christianity — New Christians caught judaizing were considered to be Christian heretics — and no longer merely Jewish infidels — and, accordingly, subject to the appropriate severe punishment. To deal with the widespread phenomenon of judaizing New Christians, the Inquisition, originally established in France in the thirteenth century because of the Albigensians, was authorized for Spain by Pope Sixtus VI in 1478, and, in 1483 Thomas Torquemada was appointed its Inquisitor-General. It soon became apparent that as long as Judaism was permitted in Spain, those New Christians who wished to maintain their ties to Judaism could find spiritual, material and institutional support and encouragement from the existing organized Jewish community. Therefore, to remove this source of support and encouragement for judaizing among New Christians, it was deemed necessary totally to eliminate the open observance of Judaism in Spain. Consequently, after some regional expulsions, in March 1492, following the fall of Granada, the last Moorish bastion in Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella issued a decree requiring all the Jews of Spain to leave within four months, by July 30. Failure to comply was punishable by death and confiscation of property.

The exact numbers of those who departed from Spain, as well as of those who converted, are a matter of scholarly dispute. Recent scholarship tends to revise substantially downward previous higher estimates of the Jewish population in fifteenth-century Spain on the basis of an improved understanding of the demographic realities of the time, and thus also to reduce substantially the absolute number of those leaving. Simultaneously, it has been suggested that a higher proportion than previously assumed converted, and additionally, that some of the exiles subsequently returned to convert. Despite the absence of statistical certainty, it is nonetheless possible to engage in some generalizations. While many Jews, including some of the educated and wealthy communal leaders, opted for conversion at the hour of decision, others chose to leave; indeed, emigrating had already commenced on a lesser scale well prior to 1492. The number of places to which emigration was possible as a Jew was limited. The majority of the exiles, especially those who lived near the borders, took the easiest option of overland routes, mainly to Portugal but also to Navarre and Provence. Far fewer embarked upon the more expensive and perilous sea voyages, fraught with the dangers of pirates, shipwreck, and drought, to North Africa, to those very few places on the Italian peninsula which would accept them, to the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, and to the mainland of the Eastern Mediterranean which was being consolidated in the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Significantly, in 1492 the Ottoman Empire did not yet include the Land of Israel, which it was to conquer in 1516. The Ottoman Sultan welcomed these new immigrants, and is alleged to have observed that although contemporaries considered Ferdinand

to have been a wise king, in reality he was not, for by expelling the Jews, he had impoverished his own kingdom and enriched the Ottoman Empire.

Whatever the exact numbers of the Spanish Jews who reached the Ottoman Empire, often only after extended wanderings, their presence did benefit it considerably, starting even before 1492. They were found in a very wide range of activities, including almost every occupation, profession and craft, on all levels. Their ranks included courtiers, physicians, apothecaries, merchants, purveyors, political and financial advisors, brokers, interpreters, farmers of the customs duties and taxes, money-changers, money-lenders, and retail shop-keepers, and they introduced printing to the Ottoman Empire. They also engaged as artisans and laborers in a very wide range of crafts, including especially weaving, dyeing and tanning, in which they continued to a certain extent the previous activities of the indigenous Romaniote Jews, often, however, introducing new techniques. Especially significant was the role of these newcomers in the manufacture and commerce of textiles; they contributed a significant element of intensification and innovation, bringing with them from Spain to Salonika a new technique for producing stronger broadcloth at a lower cost, thus helping to make that city a major woolen-cloth manufacturing center in the sixteenth century. Salonika, conveniently located on the Aegean coast — with a fine harbor and extensive hinterland which supplied it with good Macedonian wool and assisted by the “Pax Ottomanica” in the eastern Mediterranean — soon became the commercial entrepot of the Ottoman Balkans. Its merchants engaged in intensive trade with Asia Minor, the Eastern Mediterranean coast and islands, and the Dalmatian and Italian coasts of the Adriatic, especially Venice. The participation of the Jews in all aspects of textile production facilitated their success in commerce on the local, regional and international levels, and provided the base for the large and vibrant Jewish community of Salonika.

Events in Portugal turned out to be far more complex than they had been in Spain. King John of Portugal authorized six hundred wealthy Jewish families to stay in his country in return for a large payment; others, in return for an entrance fee, were allowed to remain for eight months, by which time they were to depart at their own expense on ships to be provided by the government or else they would become royal slaves. But the king did not provide adequate ships for them to leave, and those who remained without converting were enslaved. Fortunately for them, John died shortly afterward, in 1495, and was succeeded by his brother, Emmanuel. Emmanuel was very concerned with developing the economy and commerce of Portugal and, accordingly, freed the slaves so that they could become productive members of society. However, he wished to marry the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, and the princess was unwilling to consent unless

the Jews would be eliminated from Portugal. Fascinating insight into the attitude of the Portuguese government at the end of the fifteenth century emerges from a supposed discussion between the counsellors of Emmanuel as to whether the Jews should be expelled or not. Among the arguments in favor of keeping them was the fact that the pope allowed them to dwell in his territory. Induced by his example, many Christian princes in Italy, the Germanic lands, Hungary, and elsewhere in Europe, permitted the Jews to trade and engage in business of all sorts. Additionally, if they were to be expelled from Portugal, they would probably go to Africa, where, living among blind and superstitious Moslems, all hope of their conversion to Christianity would be lost. Finally, it would be greatly detrimental to the public interest if the Jews, some of whom were considerably rich, should carry their wealth to the Moslem world and enrich the enemy with skills acquired in Portugal. On the other hand, among the arguments marshalled against the Jews was the consideration that it was in the public interest to expel them immediately so that they would take with them only wealth that they had gathered in other countries, rather than expelling them later after they had amassed considerable riches by (allegedly) fraudulent means in Portugal.

Emmanuel allowed the dynastic consideration of uniting Spain and Portugal under his heirs to gain the upper hand and, in December 1496, he ordered all Jews to leave Portugal by the end of October 1497 under penalty of death, but promised them that they could depart freely. However, he really desired that they stay within his state since they were sorely needed by the economy. Therefore, he exerted pressure upon them to convert, even baptizing all children between the ages of four and fourteen, and returning them to their parents only if the latter also converted. Then, after first limiting the ports of embarkation to only three, he subsequently required all the Jews to gather in Lisbon, thereby assuring that the available shipping would not be sufficient for them, and as soon as the deadline passed, all those remaining were forced to convert.

Thus, as of 1497, Judaism was completely proscribed on the Iberian peninsula. Yet, there was a profound difference between the situation in Spain and in Portugal. In Spain, all those who had wished to remain Jews had been given the opportunity to leave, and if they desired to judaize there afterward, they had to avoid detection by the Inquisition; in Portugal, however, entire families and, indeed, communities — many of whose members had left Spain in order to be able to observe Judaism freely — were converted by force, but there was no Inquisition to investigate their conformity to their new religion.

In order to placate the newly converted, Emmanuel promised them immunity from persecution on religious grounds for twenty years; in 1512, this was again extended. However, in 1499 they were forbidden

to leave without royal permission, and — further to hamper their departure — Old Christians were barred from purchasing their real estate or providing them with bills of exchange. The Old Christians greatly resented the New Christians because of their economic success in areas from which they had previously been excluded as Jews, and also out of a not-unjustified sense that many were secretly judaizing. Tensions increased, finally erupting in a major pogrom in Lisbon in 1506. The king severely punished the perpetrators, and allowed the New Christians to leave on condition that they went to Christian countries, but subsequently they were forbidden to leave even for the Portuguese colonies. The New Christians, “the men of the nation” as they came to call themselves, were needed since they were not only the predominant element in the international commerce of Portugal in a period of great colonial expansion, but also, to a great extent, assumed the role of the “middle class” in that underdeveloped country, and especially helped with the royal finances and administration. They also entered the medical profession in great numbers, since the ordinances for ensuring “purity of blood” (*limpieza de sangre*) increasingly restricted New Christians from careers in the public service and teaching at universities, and medicine had the additional advantage that it could be practiced in other countries should one decide to leave. At the same time, however, there were also poor New Christians who eked out a living as petty traders and artisans.

Despite the concerted efforts of the New Christians to prevent the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal, it was finally authorized in 1536. Emigration of New Christians from Portugal to Spain (where the Inquisition had slackened off its investigation of judaizing somewhat), increased, and later was facilitated as Portugal was ruled by Spain from 1580 to 1640. Officially, New Christians were once more permitted to leave Portugal in 1577, but again forbidden to do so in 1580, permitted briefly between 1601 and 1610, and finally permanently allowed from 1629 on. Over the decades, the pressure of the two Inquisitions induced many New Christians, and obviously especially those who were secretly judaizing, to leave the Iberian peninsula legally or illegally, with Spain serving as a way-station for many judaizing Portuguese New Christians. Merchants often went via the major northern commercial center of Antwerp, which had come under Spanish rule in 1519 when Charles I of Spain inherited the Hapsburg lands and became the Holy Roman Emperor as Charles V. But, of course, not all who left were merchants, although for them it was relatively easier to invest their assets into readily portable merchandise and letters of exchange. Skilled doctors could also find work, often among the upper classes, in their new countries of residence. We know of some of the famous New Christian emigres, usually prominent doctors or other individuals who had already made a name for themselves before leaving the Iberian peninsula

(such as Amatus Lusitanus and Rodrigo Mendes Silva), as well as those who, after assuming Judaism, later made their mark in the Jewish religious and cultural world (such as Solomon Molho, Eliah Montaldo, Samuel Aboab, Isaac Cardoso, and Orobio di Castro, to name only a few). Yet, there were also numerous other less illustrious individuals in all walks of life, some of whom are reemerging into the light of day as a result of current investigations of the inquisitional records, while others no doubt will remain anonymous forever.

III

For New Christians desiring to leave the Iberian peninsula in the sixteenth century, the two most attractive places to go were the Ottoman Empire and the Italian peninsula. Later, after the Calvinist Netherlands threw off the yoke of Catholic Hapsburg Spain and emerged as Holland, Amsterdam provided a most welcome haven, starting around 1600. Protestant England became an option after the 1650s. France was another possibility. Although one could not openly be a Jew in Southern France until around the end of the seventeenth century, the fact that there was no Inquisition there made residence attractive for those New Christians who either merely desired to escape potential harrassment by the Iberian Inquisitions or else were satisfied to observe Judaism in relative secrecy. Soon Portuguese crypto-Jewish New Christian communities came into being in Southern France, especially in Atlantic Bordeaux and Bayonne, where the newcomers became very active in the commercial life of those two cities.

Certainly the Ottoman Empire remained the best place to go in the sixteenth century, for it possessed one major advantage over the Italian peninsula, and, indeed, over anywhere else in Christendom: it was an Islamic country whose ruler, the sultan, was totally unconcerned over the fact that individuals who had been baptised into Christianity were becoming practicing Jews in his realm. Over the decades, Iberian immigrants came to the Ottoman Empire, often via Venice, Ferrara, or elsewhere on the Italian peninsula. While they were active in a wide range of activities, as had been the Spanish exiles of the late fifteenth century, they were most prominent as physicians and advisors at the court of the sultan and in commerce, especially on the international level. Several concomitant factors explain their success in the commercial sphere. First, the Ottoman Turks had only a relatively limited tradition of maritime commerce, greatly preferring to devote themselves to careers in administration, warfare, and religion; in contrast, the former New Christians possessed extensive general knowledge and commercial experience acquired in Spain and Portugal — and, sometimes, also on the Italian peninsula — as well as an acquaintance with European languages, which ideally suited them to be interpreters, diplomats and

general intermediaries. Moreover, and perhaps most important, they were part of a widespread network of family and acquaintances in both Mediterranean and Atlantic ports, Jews and New Christians — some of whom were secretly judaizing — alike. Especially prominent in this respect was the Mendes family with its far-flung chain of agents and factors in the Ottoman Balkans and Christian Europe, including not only the Italian peninsula but also France and Spain, and its two well-known members, Doña Gracia and Joseph Nasi, who was so close to the Sultans Suleiman the Magnificent and his son, Selim II. While the Jewish merchants traded in a wide range of commodities, their role was especially prominent in manufactured textiles, as well as in raw materials such as wool, silk, cotton, flax, hides, and agricultural products, in addition to spices, precious stones and other goods imported from the East, all of which the indigenous Romaniote Jews had been somewhat involved with prior to the coming of the Sephardim.

Geographically, the Sephardi Jews spread throughout the numerous cities, towns, and villages of the Ottoman Adriatic-Dalmatian and Aegean coasts, the Balkans, Anatolia, the Eastern Mediterranean coast and islands such as Rhodes, and North Africa. They were also present in the strategically-located independent Adriatic port of Ragusa (today Dubrovnik), which served as an important center of trade with papal Ancona specifically, and the Christian West in general. Especially noteworthy, in addition to the Jewish community of Istanbul (formerly known as Byzantium and Constantinople), was the already-mentioned center of Salonika. Another major Balkan center was Adrianople, while mention must be made of Jewish commercial activity in Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli and Alexandria, and in the Land of Israel, particularly Safed in the sixteenth century. In view of the numbers of the Jews of Iberian origin, their position and the wealth that they derived from their activities as traders, entrepreneurs, financiers, brokers, and dragomans (best rendered as counsellors), they became the dominant element in many Jewish communities. Consequently, in most areas even the native Romaniote Jews, as well as the relatively fewer Italiani and Ashkenazi Jews, tended gradually to assimilate to the language and way of life of the Sephardim — not always, however, without considerable tension.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century and especially in the seventeenth, the political and economic position of the Jews in the Ottoman empire began to decline as part of the general decline of the Ottoman empire as a whole as a result of several concomitant related factors after the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. Subsequent sultans were increasingly involved in court intrigue, and the administration became ineffective, to a considerable extent because of its size and the introduction of an hereditary bureaucracy. Long and costly wars drained the treasury, taxes became exorbitant, and a breakdown in in-

ternal security greatly affected travelling merchants. Plague and drought led to shortages and a rise in prices which further aggravated the situation, especially of the Jewish moneylenders. The Moslem and Christian population resented the economic success of the Jews and became increasingly hostile, while the growing educated Christian urban mercantile class in the Balkans, and especially the native Greeks, gradually assumed the place of the Jews in both domestic and also international Mediterranean commerce.

Salonika declined, with fires and epidemics worsening the general deteriorating situation, and some Jews emigrated to Istanbul and elsewhere. Like Istanbul, Adrianople also managed to hold its own for a somewhat longer time, while Smyrna and Bursa emerged as new Jewish centers. Yet, on the whole, the crafts stagnated while innovations were being introduced in Europe, and the native textile industry, which did not adapt to changing fashions and new techniques, could not successfully compete with the variety, quality and price of the imports from the West. The Jewish role in commerce declined further as European merchants obtained extensive privileges, especially reduced customs rates, and, as a result, became increasingly active in the Ottoman Empire. Brokerage and interpreting on behalf of European merchants in the Ottoman ports to a considerable extent replaced previous Jewish activity in manufacturing, the crafts, and international trade. The Jews tended to engage more in smaller scale local retail trade, while many eked out a living as petty artisans and peddlars. Rather than being tax-farmers, Jews increasingly served only as agents and managers, and their role as physicians and advisors at the court declined. Yet, although Jewish activities on all levels were greatly reduced, the Jews were still a factor in the economy and the administration. The Jews of Salonika continued to provide the elite Janissary Corps with woollen broadcloth for uniforms as a form of taxation until the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826, and to work as stevedores in the port. Indeed, the Jews remained the largest single group in that city until the First World War.

On the other hand, the Italian peninsula had not been as attractive a place of refuge for the Spanish exiles of 1492. Many of those who arrived there had been impoverished by the expenses of the journey and, possessing only slender resources, subsequently failed to find a source of living as, increasingly, the native Italian Jews were restricted to small-scale pawnbroking. Moreover, only a very few places were willing to receive the exiles. In Rome and the papal states, the new Jewish immigrants characteristically appear primarily to have practiced medicine and operated loan-banks. A score also found a haven in Ferrara, where presumably their leading families engaged in international trade. Those who sought refuge in the Kingdom of Naples, together with the long-indigenous Italian Jews who were expelled from Sicily (also in 1492, in imitation of events in Spain), did not find peace for long;

Naples was conquered by Spain in 1495, and they were compelled to leave between 1511 and 1541, but many apparently opted for conversion. However, later, during the course of the sixteenth century, the settlement of Iberian New Christians who wished to assume Judaism on the Italian peninsula was encouraged by the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal in 1536, and facilitated by a new sense of *raison d'état* on the part of various Italian authorities. Iberian New Christian merchants were perceived by several Italian governments as being so important that they actually competed to attract the merchants to settle in their domains, and these newcomers gradually transformed the Jewish communities of the Italian peninsula.

The reason for this competition is to be found in the general economic circumstances of the time. Certain Italian port cities, especially Venice and Ancona, had enjoyed an active trade with the East, and, with the consolidation of the Eastern Mediterranean in the hands of the Ottoman Turks, Ottoman subjects began to play a more significant role in this maritime commerce. Their ranks included Jews, and increasingly Jews of Iberian origin, either exiles of 1492 and their descendants or else former New Christians who had travelled eastward to assume Judaism in the safety of the Ottoman Empire and then returned to Catholic Europe as Jewish Ottoman subjects. In 1514, Ancona began to offer favorable terms to attract these Levantine merchants. Then, after it became a part of the papal states in 1532, Pope Paul III issued a charter which — although addressed to “Jews, Turks, Greeks and all other merchants of the Levantine nation” — on the basis of its contents seems to have been intended primarily to attract Jews. Subsequently, in 1547, he granted a safe-conduct invitation to “all merchants of whatever nation, faith or sect, even if Turks, Jews or other infidels,” to settle with their families in Ancona. Very significantly — indeed, remarkably, for a document emanating from the papacy — he added that the safe-conduct was also to be valid for all persons coming from Portugal, even if “they were of Jewish origin, called New Christians,” and, moreover, that no official was to bother them with charges of heresy, apostasy or blasphemy. That safe-conduct and other privileges were then reconfirmed in 1552 by Paul’s successor, Julius III, who took the Jews under his protection and assured them that neither he nor his successors would permit any judges, either secular or ecclesiastical, to investigate them regarding their practices during the time that they had previously lived as Christians, or regarding anything else concerning their religion. However, only four years later, the counter-reformation Pope Paul IV reversed the papal policy; rejecting the economic *raison d'état* of his predecessors, he had over two dozen Jews in Ancona burned, on the grounds that they had relapsed from Christianity; thereby, he effectively ended the settling of Iberian Jews in Ancona. The Duke of nearby Pesaro attempted to benefit from

the disruption of the commerce of Ancona by admitting former New Christians to his port as a part of the "Ancona boycott,"³ but without any permanent impact.

Events were to proceed very differently in Venice, where there had not yet been an authorized Jewish community in 1492. The Republic maintained a protectionist policy which permitted only Venetian merchants and, also, reciprocally, Ottoman subjects to engage in trade with the Levant. In 1541, the Ottoman Jewish merchants, many of whom were presumably of Iberian origin, complained that they did not have enough room in the *ghetto nuovo* (the new ghetto).⁴ In response, the Venetian government, acknowledging that they were importing the larger part of the merchandise coming from the Ottoman Balkans, and realizing that it was necessary to make some concessions in order to compete with Ancona, assigned them quarters in the adjacent area known as the *ghetto vecchio* (the old ghetto), where, officially, they were allowed to stay only for the limited period of two years, which was shortened to one in 1549.

Meanwhile, the commerce of Venice with the eastern Mediterranean, which had been the traditional source of wealth of the city, providing its treasury with income from the customs duties, and its merchants with profits from their import and export trade, while enabling the city as a whole to assume the role of a major entrepot center, was declining as a result of the combined effect of numerous factors far beyond the ability of the Republic to remedy. They included the discovery of the direct sea-route to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope, which meant that less goods from the East reached the eastern Mediterranean; the concomitant shift in trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic; and the increased competition of ships from England and France (and later also Holland) for the declining quantity of goods still coming to the eastern Mediterranean Ottoman ports. As a result of these and other developments, Venetian merchants increasingly tended to withdraw from maritime trade.

Nevertheless, for a long time the Venetian government was unwilling to attempt to alleviate the situation by abandoning its traditional protective policy and opening trade between Venice and the Levant to all merchants. However, in 1589, the Venetian government did take

3. The Ancona Boycott was an attempt by Doña Gracia in 1556-7 to organize from Constantinople a boycott of the city of Ancona by Jewish merchants, in retaliation for the papal burning of former *Conversos*.

4. The ghetto had been established in Venice in 1516. While a few compulsory and segregated Jewish quarters had existed previously, the term "ghetto" is of Venetian origin, from the Italian verb *gettare*, to pour or to cast, because of the previous presence of foundries on the site in question. For further details on the important yet misunderstood institution of the ghetto, see B. Ravid, "From Geographical Realia to Historiographical Symbol: The Odyssey of the Word Ghetto," in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, D. Ruderman, ed. (New York, 1992), pp. 373-385.

one significant step. The indefatigable Jewish commercial entrepreneur, Daniel Rodriga, presumably of Iberian origin, submitted a charter on behalf of “Jewish Levantine, Spanish and other merchants.” The key feature of this proposed charter was allowing the Jewish merchants to settle in Venice and to trade with the Levant on the same terms as native Venetian subjects. The charter was referred to the Venetian magistracy of the *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*, whose advice the government was wont to seek in economic matters. The *Savii* recommended accepting it, with some changes. In justification, they explained that, although in the past their predecessors had questioned the granting of such privileges, “because of the state of trade at present on account of the changes in the affairs of the world,” they should be granted, for there was no doubt that trade, which was the main support of the city, was strengthened by offering attractive terms to new settlers who could increase its commerce. Otherwise, they would be accepted elsewhere, as had been the Spanish exiles who, because they were not admitted to Venice, had gone to the Levant with their very substantial capital, augmenting the commerce of others to the great detriment of Venice. Although, the *Savii* observed, with the inclusion of Spanish Jews it appeared that the privileges were being greatly broadened, actually it would not cause any greater harm, since they already could go to the Ottoman Empire and then come to Venice to enjoy the benefits of the law as Ottoman subjects. On the basis of the advice of the *Savii*, the Senate approved the charter, allowing “Levantine and Ponentine (i.e., Western)”⁵ Jewish merchants to come to Venice with their families for the following ten years, to import and export freely, and to practice Judaism with assurance that they would not be molested by any magistracy for reasons of religion. However, they were required, as were the other Jews in the city, to live in the ghetto and to wear a special yellow distinguishing head-covering.

The inclusion of Ponentine Jews in this charter was especially noteworthy. First, the granting of the immediate right to engage in maritime commerce with the Levant to non-Venetians, other than reciprocally to Ottoman subjects, on any terms — let alone those of equality with Venetian subjects — without the lengthy obligatory waiting period of twenty-five years, represented a concession completely unprecedented in the commercial history of Venice, and serves as clear testimony to the Venetian perception of the importance of the Jewish merchants. Subsequent attempts on the part of Christian merchants from elsewhere in Europe to secure that privilege in Venice, on occasion citing the precedent of the permission granted to the Jews, were unsuccessful.

5. Ponentine, from the Italian *ponere*, referring to the setting of the sun, parallel to *levare* (the rising of the sun) and Levantine, was the neutral circumlocution — indeed, euphemism — used in Venice to avoid recourse to the more explicit and provocative alternatives of Spanish, Portuguese or New Christian.

Second, these Ponentine Jews, to whom unprecedented commercial privileges were being granted, were former New Christians, who were allowed — indeed, required — to assume Judaism with impunity upon arriving in Venice. This authorization, over thirty years after the start of the hostile counter-reformation attitude toward the Jews and toward the adoption of Judaism by New Christians, was completely unacceptable to traditional Catholic circles, and, indeed, was later challenged. In response, Fra Paolo Sarpi, the chief ideologist and spokesman for the Venetian policy, shrewdly identified Venetian *raison d'état* with the greater good of western Christendom, as he claimed that the permission for New Christians to settle freely in Venice as Jews was for the public benefit of Christendom, in order that they would not take so much needed wealth and industriousness to the lands of the Turks. Furthermore, he asserted that granting such a safe-conduct was lawful and legitimate and could not be condemned, since many popes had allowed Marranos to live in Ancona with greater privileges than those granted by Venice, specifically citing the above-mentioned safe-conduct of Julius III of 1552, but of course not pointing out that those papal permissions had been issued before the counter-reformation. No doubt Sarpi agreed with the view expressed by one of the Venetian lay *assistenti* to the Venetian Inquisition in 1608 that it mattered very little that Paul IV had cancelled the Ancona privileges, since on one occasion the papacy actually had seen those privileges as good in principle.

These events in Venice did not, of course, go unnoticed elsewhere on the Italian peninsula. The Medicean Grand Dukes of Tuscany sought to augment the maritime commerce of their realm by creating a major trade center at Livorno (Leghorn), which possessed one major geographic asset: unlike Venice and Ancona, it was more conveniently located on the western side of Italy, directly across the Mediterranean from France and Spain. Thus, it was easier for ships coming into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic ports of Spain, France, England, and Holland, and from the Americas and Asia, and wishing to trade with Italy, to sail to Livorno rather than to undertake the longer and more perilous journey around southern Italy to Adriatic Ancona or to Venice. Similarly, ships sailing from Holland, England, France, and Spain bound for the eastern Mediterranean would also find it more convenient to make Livorno their only Italian port of call. While Western merchants were unlikely to settle in Livorno and develop its port, there were others who could be attracted to it, namely, judaizing Iberian New Christians, Jews of Iberian origin residing elsewhere on the Italian peninsula, and their Ottoman relatives and business associates.

Accordingly, in 1591, Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany issued a charter, which was reissued with slight changes in its definitive form in 1593; known as “La Livornina,” it was basically to remain in effect until Napoleon, and then again after him, until the end of the Grand

Duchy of Livorno in 1860. Although “La Livornina” formally invited “merchants of any nation, Levantine, Ponentine, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, German and Italian, Jewish, Turkish, Moorish, Persian and others” to settle in Pisa and in Livorno, its provisions clearly indicate that it was intended primarily to attract Jews and judaizing New Christians. A nineteenth-century writer noted that this charter “benefitted more than any other the Jewish nation, which almost came to see in Ferdinand I the desired messsiah, and to find in Livorno another Jerusalem.” “La Livornina” contained the same basic privileges as the Venetian charter of 1589, but with numerous very attractive additional ones. Most important, newcomers to Livorno were offered a much longer period of security, since “La Livornina” was issued for a period of twenty-five years (as opposed to ten for the Venetian charters), with automatic renewal for another twenty-five unless notice was given five years in advance. Also, it gave the Jews the same right as the Christian merchant citizens of Florence and Pisa to engage in all the *arte* as well as in all commerce except for trade in second-hand goods, which was permitted to some of the Jews of Venice. Thus, the Jews of Livorno could engage in almost all aspects of retail trade, while the Jewish merchants of Venice were restricted to wholesale importation and exportation. The Jews of Livorno were also exempted from having to wear any sign that would distinguish them from their Christian neighbors, as was required in Venice; additionally, they were permitted to purchase real estate, which was forbidden to Jews in Venice. Furthermore, no provision was ever made for the establishment of a ghetto in Livorno or in Pisa, even though some twenty years earlier the Jews had been required to live in one in Florence and in Siena, the two other places in Tuscany where they could reside.

This comparison of some key features of the charters granted to Jewish merchants (most of whom were of Iberian origin) in Venice and in Livorno demonstrates the principle that, although identical considerations of *raison d'état* could induce governments to grant privileges to Jewish merchants, nevertheless, such rational commercial and economic factors did not exert a uniform effect on the status of the Jews. Their actual position depended on the specific local environment, which was shaped by religious, social and political factors that differed substantially from one area to the next, and, accordingly, it is impossible to posit any simple economic determinism.

The course of events in Venice, and then in Livorno, induced the popes to maintain and even extend their conciliatory policy toward Jews in Ancona. Previously, in his bull, *Hebraeorum Gens* of 1569, Pope Pius V had banished the Jews from all the papal states, except for Rome — and also Ancona because of their role there in the Levant trade. Subsequently, Sixtus V, in his bull, *Christiana Pietas* (1586), had allowed the Jews to return to the cities, large castles, and lands of the papal

states, but not to the villages and hamlets. However, this permission was revoked by Clement VIII shortly after his accession to the papal throne in his bull, *Caeca et Obdurata* of 1593, which expelled the Jews from all of the papal states, except for Rome, Avignon, and, again, Ancona. This reiterated concession to economic reality in Ancona was followed in the next year by a general bull “in perpetuity” allowing merchants of all countries and nations who were trading with the Levant to come freely and securely to trade and to live in Ancona, with their goods exempt from all customs payments. The Jews of the Levant and the existing Jewish community of Ancona — needless to say, no mention was made of Jews from Spain or the West, or of New Christians, as in pre-counter-reformation days — were specifically permitted to enjoy the privileges previously granted to them by Pope Paul III, with, however, certain unspecified modifications made a short time previously by the papal chamberlain. Additionally, they were excluded from the previous decree of expulsion of 1593, and were allowed freely to go anywhere in the papal states without any molestation to collect their mercantile debts. This bull astounded the Venetian ambassador in Rome, Paolo Paruta, who observed that

it is but a few days since the Pope complained that the Levantine Jews were received in Venice So the same things are differently regarded, not in accordance with their true nature, but in the light of the gains one hopes to make therefrom

As the ten-year Venetian charter of 1589 approached its expiration, Rodriga proposed a new, very similar one, with a few changes that experience had indicated were desirable. Introduced in the Senate with some further slight changes, it passed easily. Its preamble clearly indicated the attitude of the government:

At this time, even greater are the reasons which on other occasions induced this Council to permit the residence of Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants in this city and their trade in the places of our state, principally for mercantile trade which is so important for the public service

Those opening words of the Venetian charter of 1598 were not mere rhetoric. The long-range commercial trends leading to a decline in Mediterranean trade in general were having an increasingly detrimental effect on the commerce of Venice, while within the Mediterranean itself, Venice was still facing the challenge of Ancona and now also of Livorno. Unwilling otherwise to depart from its traditional protectionist policy of excluding all non-Venetians — except reciprocally Ottoman subjects — from trade between Venice and the Levant, the Republic had to continue its attempts to attract Jewish merchants to its shores. Indeed, so greatly did the Venetian government desire their presence that, in 1633, when the Jewish merchants already in Venice claimed that additional very wealthy ones would settle in the city if

they had room to live, the Senate authorized the expansion of the ghetto into what immediately became known as the *ghetto nuovissimo*, the newest ghetto. Understandably, the charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants were renewed almost routinely every ten years throughout the seventeenth century, and the Jews of Venice retained their special commercial privileges until the Venetian Republic came to its end at the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1797.

IV

The Italian peninsula, like the Ottoman Empire, declined economically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its merchants, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, were affected adversely by the increasing shift in the locus of trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. However, because of its more accessible location to ships from the Western nations, Livorno was somewhat less vulnerable than Venice. Yet, while the Iberian diaspora in the Mediterranean was on the whole no longer the major factor in the economic sphere that it had once been, its Jewish communities continued to exist, with their institutions, communal leaders and Jews of all kinds, who, over the generations, earned their living, raised their families, and maintained and transmitted their various and varying customs.

In the meantime, as a consequence of the same considerations of *raison d'état* which had been operative on the Italian peninsula, the new Western Iberian Jewish centers in the port cities of Amsterdam, Hamburg and London came into being, increasingly prospered, and soon eclipsed those in the Mediterranean. Indeed, the Italian *raison d'état*, which so greatly benefitted the Iberian Jewish merchants, not only served as forerunner of the later mercantilist climate of opinion that led to the readmission of the Jews to Western Europe, but also of the subsequent debates over the amelioration of their status, and, eventually, their emancipation.

To ward off a potential expulsion of the Jews from Venice, the Venetian rabbi, Simone Luzzatto, wrote an Italian work entitled *A Discourse on the Status of the Jews and Especially Those Living in the Illustrious City of Venice* (1638). In it, he stressed, among other things, the great importance of maritime commerce to Venice, and strongly defended the activities of the Jewish merchants in that sector. He thus provided the theoretical formulation of the practical *raison d'état* of the Italian governments. Many of his arguments were cited almost verbatim by Menasseh ben Israel in his *Humble Addresses* of 1655, intended to secure the readmission of the Jews to England, from where they had been expelled in 1290. Subsequently, the English deist, John Toland, reiterated many of the ideas of Luzzatto in his *Reason for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland* of 1714, which, as its title indicates,

sought to facilitate the naturalization of foreign-born Jews in Great Britain.

A very significant case of mercantilist *raison d'état* occurred in Dutch New Amsterdam. After the Dutch captured north-eastern Brazil from the Portuguese in 1630, a number of Dutch Jews of Iberian origin settled in Dutch Brazil. However, when the Portuguese retook Brazil in 1654, the Jews were required to leave. Most returned to Holland, but some went on a French frigate to Dutch New Amsterdam. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of New Amsterdam, reacted by writing a letter to the directors of the Dutch West Indies Company in Amsterdam in which he expressed his desire that "the deceitful race — such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ — be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony." In turn, the Iberian Jews of Amsterdam, "the merchants of the Portuguese Nation," as they called themselves, submitted a petition requesting that the new Jewish arrivals be allowed to stay in New Amsterdam. Among other things, they claimed that the greater the population of New Amsterdam, "the better it is . . . in regard to the payment of various excises and taxes . . . and in regard to the increase of trade." As is well-known, the arguments of the Jewish merchants of Old Amsterdam were heeded, and the Jews were allowed to stay in New Amsterdam. Thus, the same considerations of commercial and fiscal *raison d'état* that led to admitting the Iberian Jewish merchants to various Mediterranean jurisdictions and elsewhere in Western Europe also were invoked in the New World. Once again, as is so often the case, the general ideologies and attitudes of the times in the outside world profoundly affected Jews, from the Ottoman shores of the eastern Mediterranean to the American shores of the western Atlantic.

To conclude, it is most appropriate that, at last, increasing attention is being paid to all aspects of the existence and achievements of the Iberian diaspora in the East and in the West. Certainly, it is especially significant — indeed, almost paradoxical — that the commemoration of one of the major traumatic events in Jewish history, the exile of the Jews from Spain in 1492, is indirectly contributing to a partial revision of the lachrymose conception of Jewish history, by shedding new light on the achievements of those descendants of the generation of that exile who were successful in maintaining or reasserting their identity as Jews.

Ethnic Rivalry or Melting Pot: The “Edot” in the Roman Ghetto

KENNETH R. STOW

IN HIS DRAMATIC CHRONICLE, *Shevet Yehudah*, written toward the middle of the sixteenth century, the Sefardi exile, Shelomo ibn Verga,¹ tells the story of Spanish Jews arrived at Rome in 1492. Waiting outside the city — in fact, we know from an independent Christian source, Stephan Infessura, that they were camped in a kind of tent city on the Appian way² — these Jews were received most uncordially by their Roman brethren. Whether for fear of competition, concern that too many Jews in the city might spark Christian hostility, or plain dislike of the haughty Sefardim (ibn Verga does not tell us), the Roman Jews appealed to the pope to send the exiles away. The magnanimous pope, the Spaniard Alexander VI Borgia, instead welcomed the Sefardim and placed a heavy fine on the local community.

Generations have read and accepted this story at face value, although not unexceptionally.³ But, recently, what many suspected has been confirmed. Ibn Verga is to be read more as a dramatist than a historian, at least in the sense that he did not treat the “factual” matter appearing on his pages as historical data. It was grist to make a point; thus, these “facts” could be changed, modified, or even invented at will. Indeed, one motif runs throughout ibn Verga, and that is burlesque. Years ago it was noted that an anonymous Italian chronicler of the late sixteenth century followed ibn Verga’s style in describing the events which led (at that time) to several local expulsions from the Veneto (territory under Venetian rule).⁴ That style is one of purposeful exaggeration, implying that Jewish behavior is invariably out of pro-

1. Shelomo ibn Verga, *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*, ed. Y.F. Baer and A. Shohat (Jerusalem, 1947), pp. 123-24. The context is the overall problems of Spanish Jewish refugees, and the specific background is grave hunger throughout Italy, which brought non-Christians to seek to keep these Jews away. To view the story in a wholly ethnic perspective is to view it out of its own perspective. Ibn Verga, pp. 122-25.

2. Stefano Infessura, *Diario della Città di Roma*, ed. O. Tommasini (Rome, 1890), p. 288.

3. Most recently, A. Toaff, “The Jewish Communities of Catalonia, Aragon and Castile in 16th Century Rome,” *The Mediterranean and the Jews: Banking, Finance and International Trade (XVI-XVIII Centuries)*, ed. A. Toaff and S. Schwarzfuchs (Ramat-Gan, 1989), pp. 249-270. But see the objection of Roberto Bonfil, *Gli ebrei in Italia nell’epoca del Rinascimento* (Florence, 1991), p. 55.

4. I. Sonne, ed. *Mi-Paolo Ha-Revi’i ’ad Pius ha-Hamishi* (Jerusalem, 1954), pp. 184-85.

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portion to necessity and events. With respect to the Spanish expellees, ibn Verga may have been referring to the general unpreparedness and consequent overreaction that characterized their reception everywhere, perhaps most notably in Salonika, where initially many of them were said *not* to be Jews. He may have also been criticizing abuses of the ancient *herem hayishuv* (ban of residence), which Jewish communities since about the twelfth century had used to keep out newcomers whom they deemed undesirable. Ibn Verga's interest in what happened when Sefardim arrived at specifically Rome may, therefore, have been only tangential.

This does not mean that there was no concern in the Roman (Italian) Jewish community when Jews fleeing Spain presented themselves at the city gates. Apart from surely being unprepared and ill equipped to absorb so many unexpected immigrants, Roman Jews may also have been afraid. The Jews had been expelled from Spain (in large measure) on a charge of inveigling *conversos* to return to Judaism. Might not the same charge — exacerbated by the likely presence of a number of ex-*conversos* among the arriving Spaniards — now be levelled against the Jews of Rome, too? And might not the pope — as he was in fact then being urged to do by the Spanish ambassador — not only prohibit the Sefardim from entering, but go a step further and expel the Jews of Rome as well?⁵ Whether such fears had any basis in fact is irrelevant. What counts is what the Jews of Rome very well may have believed.

However, any such fears must soon have been dispelled. One might even venture that the tone of Italian-Sefardi Jewish relations at Rome was in no small measure determined by the general absence of *conversos* among the latter. Where — as at Venice — many Spanish Jews had a *converso* background, the community, even formally, remained divided well into the seventeenth century. In Ancona, the popes bestowed two distinct communal charters, one for Italians (Jews), the other explicitly for so-called Turks and Orientals, read: re-Judaized Marranos.⁶ By contrast, at Rome, a politically and administratively united community was functioning by no later than 1518,⁷ and fully chartered by 1524 in the form of the *Capitoli* (By-Laws) composed by the banker Daniel da Pisa. And one scholar, at least, has seen in that union an act of intracommunal reconciliation.⁸ Yet, that scholar, M.A. Shulvass, has stood virtually

5. Infessura, *Diario*, p. 288.

6. On the ghettos in Venice, see B. Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background and Context of the Establishment of the Ghetti of Venice," *Gli ebrei e Venezia*, ed., G. Cozzi (Milan, 1987), pp. 211-60; on the communities in Ancona, see K.R. Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy, 1555-1593* (New York, 1977), pp. 29-32.

7. A. Esposito, "Le comunità ebraiche di Roma prima del Sacco (1527): Problemi di identificazione," *Henoch* 12 (1990): 165-90, 18; the reference is to the texts, which seem to argue contrary of the author's thesis.

8. M.A. Shulvass, *The Jews in the World of the Renaissance*, trans. E. Kose (Leiden, 1973), p. 62.

alone. The standard interpretation — deriving from the story in ibn Verga and also da Pisa's proemium to the *Capitoli*, which says that the text was composed "to end strife and bring a halt to the complaints of querulous men"⁹ — asserts that da Pisa's administrative union produced no more than a temporary truce. The *Capitoli* themselves were emblematic of the need periodically to calm the endemic ethnic feuding which endured until the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Nevertheless, apart from generalized claims, the one truly documented case of inter-group Jewish strife at Rome, that between Castilians and Aragonese, hardly reflects inter-ethnic fighting at all.¹¹ The disorders which da Pisa mentions were more likely motivated by questions of political franchise, to be precise, the unwillingness of those in control to cede power to newcomers, and, even more, to grant them rights with respect to the distribution of taxation.¹²

Accordingly, da Pisa does refer to the number of Italian as opposed to non-Italian (*Ultramontani*) representatives on the communal *Congrega* (its governing board) and on other communal panels. Yet, he never suggests that the back-biting and informing to the authorities, whose frequency he condemns, were acts of one ethnic group against another.¹³ Indeed, one reason for the deletions or omissions may have been economic envy. The *Capitoli* define the membership of the *Congrega* vertically, as well as horizontally, this time — tellingly — along economic lines: 20 *banchieri*, 20 *ricchi*, and 20 *mediocri*, divided 30/30 between *Italiani* and *Ultramontani*. Similar political and related issues of taxation were also the probable root of rivalries at Verona, which pitted the Ashkenazi majority against *all* the other groups — Italians, Sefardim, and so forth — combined.¹⁴ This spontaneity, as it were, of ethnic (re-) groupings leaves little doubt that so-called ethnic struggles in the Italian communities were primarily struggles to establish a political and fiscal balance of power. Indeed, the term *natio* (of Jewish Italians or *Ultramontanis*) which has been translated as *edah* — ethnic group in contem-

9. A. Milano, *Il Ghetto di Roma* (Rome, 1965), p. 178.

10. A. Toaff, *Il Ghetto di Roma nel Cinquecento, conflitti etnici e problemi socioeconomici* (in Hebrew, Italian summary) (Ramat Gan, 1984), p. 14.

11. Shimon Schwarzfuchs, "Controversie nella Comunità di Roma agli inizi del secolo XVI," *Scritti in Memoria di Enzo Sereni* (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 95-100 (Italian section), pp. 133-44 (Hebrew); cf. Toaff, *Ghetto*, pp. 12-15 and Esposito "Le comunità," p. 165; although we await the article on the events leading up to the publication of the *Capitoli* which Esposito has promised, p. 188.

12. Milano, *Il Ghetto*, p. 177.

13. A. Milano, "I Capitoli di Daniel da Pisa e la comunità di Roma," *La Rassegna mensile d'Israel* 10(1935-36): 409-26 (the text).

14. R. Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, trans. J. Chipman (Oxford, 1990), pp. 116-22; see also, pp. 108-09, where we see another aspect of so-called ethnic feuding, namely, feuding rabbis. But here the issue is clearly one of power through asserting one tradition of halakhic teaching and interpretative authority against another. See also the literature cited in the notes, there.

porary usage — in sixteenth century usage did not mean that at all.¹⁵ Rather, the division (in certain documents) of Roman Jews into Italian and Ultramontane *nationes* was precisely the same as that adopted at Church councils to differentiate the Italian from non-Italian representatives and factions — in a word, between two competing power-blocks.¹⁶

At Rome, real ethnic differences made themselves felt in such areas as liturgy, resulting in the division of the community into various *scole* (synagogues), each with its own (regional) order of prayer — a fact of life that (residually) exists at Rome even to the present. These synagogues, of course, had their own officials, regulated the members' synagogal behavior, and even collected annual fees, making them outlets for political aspirations. However, the political functions of the synagogue were limited. As revealed by the statute drawn up by the Aragonese Synagogue in 1511, the synagogues exercised no jurisdictional powers whatsoever, nor did they collect taxes.¹⁷ Thus, these synagogal-cultural units should not be mistaken for separate ethnically based (administrative) communities.¹⁸ Terms such as *communitas* and *universitas*, that appear frequently in various early sixteenth century texts concerning Jewish affairs, refer not to administrative bodies, but — typical of the terminological imprecision of the times — they are synonymous with *scola*, or synagogue, with which they are used interchangeably.¹⁹

Yet, even in the synagogue, ethnicity was sometimes less than it seemed. For synagogue membership was always in flux. Just as synagogues such as the Castigliana and Catalana alternately amalgamated and split apart, so did individuals shift their synagogal allegiance, shifts that, on occasion, brought them to cross over *edah* lines. These shifts do not appear to have been considered unusual by contemporaries.

15. Toaff, *Ghetto*, p. 12, and his Italian title, *etnici*; also Milano, *Il Ghetto*, p. 176.

16. G. Bluestein, *Storia degli ebrei in Roma* (Rome, 1920), p. 118; see also the usage in Shelomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews* (Toronto, 1990), p. 3: #1271a, for example of the use of *natio*, *nationes*.

17. Esposito, "Comunità," pp. 178-80.

18. Esposito, "Comunità," *passim*, and Toaff, "Jewish Communities," pp. 252-54, argue the contrary.

19. For example, the 1509 "*scola o communitas teutonicorum et gallorum*;" "*camerario comunitatis Scole Nove Italarum* (1526);" the statutes of the Aragonese of 1511 — in one item "*Communità*," in another "*schola*;" and "*communitas scole Catalanorum . . . et universitate(!) predictae*" (1518). In 1518 there is mention of a "*generalis universitatis hebreorum Urbis*," this time with *universitas* meaning the (real) Community; the texts are cited in Esposito, "Comunità," 157, 174, 179, 184, 188. However, in the same document eleven synagogues are referred to as "*dictis scolis et universitatibus*." Indeed, none other than the *Capitoli* of da Pisa speak of "*l'Università delle scuole*." [See Milano, *Capitoli*, capitolo 23, p. 420.] That some years previously one hears of a "*universitas forensium et ultramontanorum*" and a "*universitas hebreorum romanorum*" does not necessarily modify the picture. The references may likely be only to ill-fated attempts (which there were) to amalgamate a number of synagogues into one.

The preamble to a registration of members, made in 1571 by the *Gemilut Hasadim* (charity and burial) confraternity, states that individuals had to choose once and for all just which identity, Italian or Ultramontane, they wished to have.²⁰

Synagogue membership lists from the mid-1550s are especially informative.²¹ A member of the Hachim family might belong to either the Sicilian synagogue or perhaps to the Castilian-French one. The same applies to the Tripolesi, people once thought to have come from North Africa, but who are already listed as members of the Palermitan community in Sicily at the mid-fifteenth century. A Tripolesi in Rome could easily have been one of their descendants.²² Just why, in the 1527 census,²³ which sometimes lists censees' geographic origins, the place name Tripolesi appears is not clear. Thirty years later, matters were more confused. The 1571 registration of *Gemilut Hasadim* members lists all Tripolesi members as *Tramontani* (= *Ultramontani*). By contrast, some Cepranos appear as *Tramontani*, but the majority are *Italiani*, belonging to the *Scola Tempio*, the *Scola Nova*, and the *Scola Porta(leone)*. Most likely, these are members of more than one family. To further complicate matters, Ceprano is in southern Lazio, suggesting that some people with this name may have originated in Sicily. There are also surprises. The descendants of Yeruham of Fondi — a town actually in the Kingdom of Naples (although Fondi is in extreme southern Lazio and not Campania) — found their name at Rome changed to Capone and thence to Milano — because, as the texts explain, one Solomon Capone went to Lombardy to collect taxes for the Roman community. But the Capone were members of the *Scola Tempio*, ostensibly the synagogue of very long established Roman Jews.²⁴ The *Gemilut Hasadim* list contains other oddities, like the Zadiq, otherwise an Ashkenazi, but here an Italian.

What gave this fluidity its initial impetus? To some extent it must have been the large number of Jewish "ethnic" groups present in Rome. Multiplicity bred, as it were, familiarity instead of the sense of opposition that the existence of only two camps might have fostered. Preceding the Spaniards in Rome had been the Provençals (toward the end of the fifteenth century) and Ashkenazim (some decades earlier). There

20. Toaff, *Ghetto Roma*, pp. 64-72.

21. *Archivio Storico Capitolino*, Rome, Section III. F. (fascicle), 1.1. (liber), 1. ff. (folios) 3v; F.2, 1.2, ff. 24v, 25v, 30r, 92v-93r, 105v; F.2, 1.3, f. 64v; F.2, 1.4, ff. 78, 79, 80r, 81v; F.3, 1.2, ff. 20r-21r, 30r, 45r, 47-48r; F.7, 1.1, f. 113r; F.9, 1.1, ff. 48v, 57r; F.9, 1.2, f. 17r, 22v; F.11, 1.3, ff. 64-65r, 61-63r, 70v-71r; F.11, 1.3, f. 63v; F.11, 1.4, ff. 41v-43v; F.12, 1.1, ff. 25r, 33r, 50r, 76r, 110v. All contain full or partial lists of synagogue members. Other lists appear in Milano, *Ghetto*, pp. 223-24, and Esposito, *Comunità*, *passim*.

22. E. Ashtor, "Palermitan Jewry in the Fifteenth Century," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 50(1979), pp. 242-43.

23. D. Gnoli, "Descriptio Urbis o censimento della popolazione di Roma avanti il sacco borbonico," *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 17(1894), pp. 375-520.

24. E.g., *Archivio Storico Capitolino*, Rome, F.1, 1.1, f. 66v.

were also the Sicilians (1510 and 1542). Surprisingly, these last — who never relinquished their own liturgy or synagogue²⁵ — were, by mid-sixteenth century, lumped with the *Italiani*, a classification which — because of their distinctive dialect, social practices and experience under Aragonese rule — is much less obvious than it may superficially appear to be. Indeed, about 1505, Sicilians may briefly have been considered “*Ultramontani*.”²⁶ No less surprising is the lumping of the French with the Spaniards, in particular, the Castilians. This has been explained on the basis of their small numbers following the sack of 1527.²⁷ Yet, to have allied with the Catalans — which the *Francesi* (as they were called) did not do — would have made much greater sense. Medieval Catalan Jewry maintained close contacts with that in (Jewish) Provence, the Languedoc; their (true) Provencal descendants must have appreciated this well. Alternatively, the Ashkenazim, numerous enough to have their own small synagogue, might also be expected to have made overtures to the French.

As for the Italians themselves, there should be no illusion that they formed a solid block. The Italian synagogues were four in number, and this division was jealously maintained. Synagogue members came from varying Italian regions. Members of the *Scola Porta(Leone)* most frequently came from southern Lazio. The names of congregational leaders also are constant, no doubt a function (in part) of wealth. Political advantage in the hands of the monied, therefore, and not necessarily ethnic distinctiveness, may have furnished a prime reason for maintaining separate synagogues, Italian or other.

Nevertheless, working against any such oligarchic arrangement were the facts of matrimony. Within the individual Roman synagogues there was no discernible pattern of intra-synagogal marriage. Synagogue members did not make a point of marrying their offspring one to another. Old marital usages also changed. The Sicilians gave up their tradition of marrying first cousins.²⁸ They also did not quibble — from no later than the 1530s — about marrying outside their *edah*, admittedly in limited numbers. In this, they were not alone.

Indeed, the most important ethnic fact about sixteenth century Jewish Rome is that the “outmarriage” rate was remarkably high — outmarriage here meaning, of course, marriages between Jews of the various *edot*. To appreciate this statement, the outmarriage rate at Rome may be contrasted with that in the State of Israel. In both cases, this rate is that of outmarriage in similar populations, each composed of immigrants and of first-and second-generation native born Jews. The

25. Josef Sermoneta, *Jews in Italy*, on Sicilian liturgy.

26. Esposito, “*Comunità*,” p. 183.

27. Toaff, “Jewish Communities,” pp. 250-51.

28. H. Bresc, “*La famille dans la société sicilienne médiévale*,” *La famiglia e la vita quotidiana* (Rome, 1986), pp. 187-93.

various *edot* in Israel have also had to achieve a *modus vivendi*. The Israeli outmarriage rates have been as follows:

Percentage of outmarrying Israeli spouses.²⁹

Origin	1946-1955	1956-1961	1964-1973	1974-1983
Husbands Asia-Africa	9.7	8.2	16.9	16.0
" Europe-America	8.0	16.9	18.6	28.8
Wives Asia-Africa	15.3	15.7	16.5	19.1
" Europe-America	4.9	8.9	19.1	24.0

These percentages, based on the 1961 and 1983 censuses, show a constant increase in the rate of outmarriage, in all the *edot*, and between both men and women. This increase has been prompted by various factors, not the least among them being the decreasing differences in educational and social status, which have traditionally been considered an impediment to the marriage of African-Asian Israeli men with European-American Israeli women, and vice-versa.

European-American men in Israel were also encouraged to outmarry by what is known as a demographic "squeeze." In the years 1972 and 1983 a sex ratio of — respectively — 132 and 122 men to every 100 women (of a reasonable marital age) forced many of these men either to outmarry or to remain single. On the other hand, for most of this period, the ethnic ratio was about 60 to 40 in favor of the Asian-Africans. Such a ratio would normally encourage homogamy (marriage within the group), following the old saying that like attracts like, especially when the choice is ample. Still, this factor has been countered by that of native-Israeli birth, widely operative since the 1960s. Shared values and perspectives of the native born have outweighed potential ethnic ones, once again to promote outmarriage.³⁰

How do the outmarriage rates at Rome compare? In a society as purportedly conflicted over ethnic issues as was that of sixteenth century Rome, we should expect these rates automatically to have been lower. Lowering them even further was the fact that Italians never formed less than fifty percent of the Jewish population of Rome, and probably that percentage was always somewhat greater. By 1571 (at the latest), only 26% of Roman Jews were calling themselves non-Italians.³¹ Italian Jews thus had an especially large pool of prospective Italian spouses to choose from, larger even than the pool of like Jews available to Israelis of Asian and African origin. Homogamy should have been the rule. Likewise, as an aggregate (with the possible, although only partial exception of the Sicilians), at Rome neither Italians nor non-Italians would

29. Adapted from Table 26, p. 150, in U.O. Schmelz, S. Della Pergola and U. Avner, *Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews: A New Look* (Jerusalem, 1991); the names for ethnic groupings in the Table are the same as those used in this book.

30. Schmelz, *Ethnic Differences*, pp. 37-41, 46-49.

31. Toaff, *Ghetto*, p. 38, although note there the slight error; the list has 287 *Italiani*, not 278 (ibi) and 101 *Ultramontani*, not 110 (ibi).

have had special reason for seeking partners outside their ethnic group for financial or educational motives. Unlike Venice, for example — where the “Levantine” were often well to do merchants and many of the Ashkenazim (the city’s other large Jewish group) were bankers in a state of constant decline — at Rome, there seems to have been no blatant financial (or educational) division along ethnic lines. All groups had their share of bankers, rich, and poor. Indeed, in 1536, the licensed bankers at Rome were:³²

Italian	Ultramontane	Undetermined
Benj. Lucollo	Isach Goioso	Samuel Albizi
Salomon Pisa	Menachem Cordovan	Jacob di Daniel
Angelo Rosetta	David Figo	Moise di Yehiel
Angelo Scazzochio	David Ram	
R. Massod	Menachem Tartaglia	
Moise Tusso	Joshua Corcos	
Sabato di Fondi	Angelo da Rohat	
Benj. Benafri	Salomon Zarfati	
Moshe Gioello	Ovadia Roselli	
Salomon HaRofe		

The division between *edot* is fairly even. Most other Roman Jews were small merchants, entrepreneurs or craftsmen — professions which had long characterized not only Roman Jews, but also Sicilian and Spanish ones as well.³³

These economic similarities perhaps explain in part why early out-marriages at Rome seem to have occurred not so much between social unequals as between members of the wealthier and more distinguished Roman Jewish families, to wit, the Piatelli (Italian) — Figo (Sefardi) match of 1538 and the proposed da Pisa (Italian) — d’Aversa (Sefardi) match of 1557 (a pattern that interestingly has repeated itself in contemporary Rome between wealthier and socially highly placed Roman Jews and those who fled Libya in 1967.) These two matches, moreover, were ones in which not only parental desire, but the affections of the spouses played a visible role — with the first match resulting in a long-lasting marriage, and the second in a revolt of the would-be bride and the breaking-off of the engagement.³⁴

32. *Archivio Storico Capitolino*, F.11,1.1.f.17v.

33. E. Ashtor, “Palermitan Jewry in the Fifteenth Century,” pp. 231-38; B. Gampel, *The Last Jews on Iberian Soil, Navarrese Jewry 1479/1498* (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 22-49.

34. *Archivio Storico Capitolino*, Rome, Section III, F.11,1.2.f.78r; F.12,1.1.f.34r. The question of marriage strategies also needs surveying. For instance, the Rignano banking family made matches with Jews from every *edah* and origin: the Palestrina, the Tedeschi, the da Pisa, the Sulmona, the Aversa, the di Sezze, the Ceprano, the Levi, the dello Piglio, the Maruan-Francese, the Franco-Tedeschi, the di Porto, the Leucciottio, the di Nepi, the di Lattes, and the Corcos. How meaningful these matches were remains to be seen.

These particular examples aside, however, the outmarriage rate in sixteenth century Rome should have been low; but it was not. Final calculations have yet to be made. The sample of 229 marriages (contracted between 1536 and 1633) used here to draw conclusions represents only about 40% of all Roman Jewish marriages contracted during this time. Nevertheless, since most of the spouses belonged to well known (not necessarily wealthy or influential) Roman Jewish families, these marriages likely reflect the norm.³⁵

What was that norm like? Between the years

1536-1545	there were 18 total marriages, in which 2 Italian men and 2 non-Italian men (22.2%) outmarried. Between
1545-1556	there were 29 total marriages, in which 3 Italian men and 4 non-Italian men (24.1%) outmarried. Between
1556-1564	there were 30 total marriages, in which 5 Italian men and 0 (insufficient data) non-Italian men (16.5%) outmarried. Between
1564-1574	there were 22 total marriages, in which 2 Italian men and 3 non-Italian men (22.7%) outmarried. Between
1576-1585	there were 80 total marriages, in which 10 Italian men and 8 non-Italian men (22.5%) outmarried. Between
1586-1595	currently there is no available data for the families studied. And between
1596-1633	(years for which the records are still incomplete) there were 51 total marriages, in which 9 Italian men and 8 non-Italian men (33%) outmarried.

Of the entire 230 marriages, 56, or 24.3%, thus were outmarriages.³⁶ It is especially instructive to look at the percentages for Italian men (the largest single marrying and outmarrying group, and hence the one — for the moment — yielding the most reliable statistics — and perhaps, given the ethnic construction of the community, the most revealing ones). In the decade (period) commencing in

35. One might say that all the numbers here are lower, and never higher, than they ought to be, since in each period noted in the Tables following in the text, marriages where the origin of both partners is unknown have been treated like "inmarriages." Statistically, this is incorrect; but it means that we cannot be accused of exaggerating the results.

36. In fact, this figure and all those in the following Table may be higher yet; the percentage was calculated on the basis of all marriages, including those where the *edah* of the partners, one or both, was unknown. Calculating only on the basis of marriages where the *edah* identity of both partners is known would thus raise the percentage considerably. At this stage, however, minimum percentages more than suffice to make the point.

1536-1545	16.6 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages
1545-1556	13.0 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages
1556-1564	19.2 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages
1564-1574	14.2 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages
1576-1585	19.2 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages
1586-1595	no data for the families studied
1596-1633	21.4 percent of all marriages by Italian men were outmarriages

Yet, even allowing for error (given the partial nature of the data), there can be no question that these percentages are similar to, or even higher than, those which characterize outmarriage in Israel, and especially among the *edot ha-mizrah* (Jews of Asian and African origin). And this was so even though the Italians constituted a similar or even much greater percentage in the sixteenth century Roman Jewish *Comunità* than do the *mizrahim* in Israel today (meaning that the Italian percentages should be expected to have been lower, considering the tendency toward homogamy within a particularly large group). In Rome, apparently, Italian men were prepared to marry non-Italian women at a rate that was growing, as well as one high enough to suggest that the melting pot was on a brighter flame than were inter-ethnic frictions.

This conclusion is reinforced by noting the substantial number of marriages that took place between children of members of different synagogues — especially the Italian and Sicilian — where the difference between parental backgrounds was significant. These matches are comparable to those between Moroccan and Iraqi Jews in Israel, matches often fraught with difficulties the equal of the ones encountered in marriages between members of different *edot*.

In addition, a greater (absolute) number of non-Italians (of all stripes) was outmarrying than were Italians, despite the non-Italians' low percentage in the entire Roman Jewish population.³⁷ French and Ashkenazi Jews, furthermore, rarely, if ever, married among themselves. These are suggestive pieces of information. Nevertheless, the aggregate of non-Italian marriages in the sample is too small for generalizations. We should hesitate before proposing that the non-Italians in Rome, like so many other immigrant groups, were anxious to mix and blend with the "natives." Still, the truth is that, by no later than the mid-sixteenth century, Roman Jews had adopted a standardized

37. We must be wary of seeing the 30/30 division in the *Congrega* as ever reflecting a 50/50 balance in the population. This was not yet the period of one man/one vote. It is hard to imagine the Sefardim, in particular, ever equaling the Italians.

form of pre-nuptial agreement. And Jews of all the *edot* used this form, except on those exceedingly rare occasions when someone specified using an Italian or Sefardi model.³⁸ This common form's existence, indeed, has deprived the historian of an excellent tool — differentiated texts — for determining just who (with respect to each *edah*) was marrying whom. On the other hand, the form's existence — as well as the resort to the same Jewish notary (an Italian one, at that) to draw up pre-nuptial agreements — strengthens the impression that, at Rome, from an early date, the various Jewish *edot* were more susceptible to amalgamating than to going their separate ways.

In more commensurate terms, one may fairly say that friction between *edot* in Rome never surpassed that known in contemporary Israel: at the worst, it was a source of distrust and ill feeling; at the best, an issue of liturgical identity and pride in one's cultural roots. Where the *edah* retained any public meaning at Rome — apart from the synagogue — was principally in matters of clout related to the Jewish body politic. Thus, in 1571, following an influx of Italian Jews into Rome on the heels of the 1569 expulsions from the smaller centers of the Papal State, the Italians insisted — and succeeded — in redividing the *Congrega*. No longer split 30/30, henceforth the *Congrega* would contain 35 Italians to 25 Ultramontanes. Comprising more than 75% of the local Jewish population, the Italians could no longer consent to an even split of legislative power. Yet, all the while, since 1524, in the restricted Council of 20, which had run the *Comunità's* day to day affairs, there had been 12 Italians to 8 Ultramontanes, just as there were 2 Italian *fattori* (communal heads) to 1 Ultramontane.³⁹ The latter had never attained true political parity. Whatever truth may underlie the tale of ibn Verga with which we opened this brief account, therefore, the fact is that, in the long run, the Italian Jews of Rome had little to fear from the Ultramontane arrivals, Sefardi or otherwise. And whatever fears they harbored, they had little or no incentives to act them out. Indeed, the Italians' subsequent willingness to intermarry with the newcomers shows just how evanescent these fears actually were.

38. E.g. F.11,1.3,f.73v; F.2,1.1,f.16v: the first between 2 Sefardim, the second, 2 Italians, in 1540 and 1542 respectively.

39. Milano, "*Capitoli*," *capitolo* 36, p. 426.

Vilna on the Seine: Jewish Intellectuals in France Since 1968.

By JUDITH FRIEDLANDER. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. 249 pp.

Reviewed by MAUD S. MANDEL

THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, and social position of French Jewry has been drastically affected by the tremendous demographic and political changes which have occurred in France since the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result of the tragedies of World War II, as well as several waves of Jewish immigration — beginning in the 1880s when East European Jews fleeing persecution began flocking westward, and then again in the mid-1950s when hundreds of thousands of North African Jews began coming to France — French Jewry has gone from being the smallest European Jewish community to the largest. These demographic and political changes have had a tremendous impact on French Jews both in terms of how they view themselves internally, and how they regard themselves vis-à-vis French society. Since emancipation in the late eighteenth century, the majority of French Jews have attempted to assimilate into the secular French culture. In recent years, however, there have been some marked changes in this assimilationist trend, particularly among the French Jewish intellectuals.

In her book, *Vilna on the Seine: Jewish Intellectuals in France Since 1968*, Judith Friedlander addresses how one important sector of French Jewish society, the intellectual elite, has attempted to *redefine* the relationship between being Jewish and living in modern France. She suggests that in order

to "... take an interest in the heritage of their people and in the many traditions that separate Jews from their Gentile neighbors" (p.2), these Jewish intellectuals, both young and old, have turned to the ideas and ideologies of the Jews who came from the Lithuanian city of Vilna in the early part of the twentieth century. Friedlander writes: "For Jews who knew Vilna before the Second World War, the city's name evokes images of Talmud and revolution, of rigid orthodoxy and cosmopolitanism" (p.5). Throughout the book, she uses the image of Vilna both literally and metaphorically to indicate how French Jewish intellectuals have been moving toward more ethnic and religious definitions of Judaism. She suggests that this return to more traditional conceptions is largely due to the ideological ramifications of the Holocaust. However, she also stresses that contemporary scholars have used the ideas of Lithuanian scholars to address many of the issues facing Jews in modern French society, and have thus brought these concepts to a wider audience of younger French Jewish intellectuals who, though not necessarily of Eastern European origin, are attempting to integrate ideas which originated in Vilna in further philosophical and religious pursuits.

Friedlander's argument is twofold. First, she suggests that the development of modern French Jewish intellectual culture has been more heavily influenced by "established tradition" than by the creation of new rituals and ideologies specifically conceived as a result of modern realities. Secondly, she argues that the French Jewish intellectual elite is in the process of balancing the two separate heritages which affect French Jewry: that of the European Enlightenment and universal humanism, and that of traditional Judaism. Although

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French Jews may have faced the contradictions presented to them by these two heritages in the many years since their emancipation. Friedlander argues that, since 1968, there has been a renewed interest in determining how these two heritages interact, if they do so at all. Her thesis is that, in recent years, French Jewish scholars are much less interested in rejecting Jewish traditions than previously had been true.

In order to explore the ramifications of the philosophical and cultural pursuits undertaken by the French Jewish intellectual establishment, Friedlander discusses three groups of French Jewish thinkers. The first consists of those who, following the 1968 student revolt, decided to begin defining themselves ethnically and culturally as Jews rather than as Frenchmen. As such, they agitated for nonterritorial cultural nationalism for Jews and other ethnic minorities in France. While they rejected both religion and Zionism as the ideological focus for the Jews living in the Diaspora, they promoted the development of a secular Jewish culture, by introducing secular Jewish educational and cultural activities into French Jewish society, such as study sessions in Jewish history or classes in Yiddish and in Jewish cooking. While many of the younger participants in the minority nationalist movements had no previous connection to the Yiddish language and culture, most of the leaders were born and educated in Eastern Europe. Thus, they transferred definitions of Jewish culture into the French setting by using the French language rather than the Yiddish which had been spoken and read in *Litkeh* (the areas in the present day Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Byelorussia, Latvia, and Russia which were the home of many old Jewish communities): "Those living in the region spoke

their own dialect of Yiddish, had special culinary customs, and studied Talmud in a style that distinguished them from Jews who had settled in other parts of Eastern Europe" (p.6). Friedlander points to the cross here between ethnic Jewish and French culture.

The second group that she discusses consists of assimilationist Jews in France who attempted to reconcile the contradictions of remaining tied to a secular French society *and* a religious Jewish society. Some of these Jews, most notably, Emanuel Levinas, have turned to sacred texts for a better understanding of how the two interact. Although many of the younger Jewish intellectuals do not have his background or religious training, they have used his guidance to live a Jewish life within a secular French society.

Lastly, Friedlander discusses those French Jewish intellectuals who have attempted several other solutions to the problems posed by secular society, such as revolutionary Marxism and Maoism, but who eventually turned to Orthodox Judaism as the ultimate answer. These Jews have taught themselves to read the sacred texts and have rejected secular French Enlightenment ideals. Friedlander does not maintain that these three types of French Jewish intellectuals are completely insular and separate. Rather, she shows how one group has affected another in the years since 1968, as she traces the biographies of several important French Jewish thinkers.

Both the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of *Vilna on the Seine* lie in the fact that it focuses on an extremely small sector of French Jewish society. The work masterfully combines anthropological and historical methods in order to explore the complexities which have faced French Jewish intellectuals since 1968, but since

Friedlander is less interested in historical origins than she is in exploring the current intellectual environment confronting French Jews, she does not examine in any depth the evolution of French Jewish intellectual culture during the period prior to 1968. While she does comment on the political and social atmosphere facing French Jewry in the post World War II years, she does not take into account the relationship of French Jews to the larger French society and culture in the years before World War II. Thus, her discussion remains extremely focussed on a specific and narrow group of people. By presenting a limited sector of modern French Jewish society, namely the intellectual elite, Friedlander does not attempt to draw conclusions about the larger French Jewish community. Rather, she explores the particular questions and issues which have interested a given community over a limited period of time. In the introduction, she explains how her own relationship with the people and material presented in the text helped shape her presentation, thus placing herself and the people about whom she writes in a specific cultural and historical context. By doing so, she gives an extremely vivid account of the intellectual foundation present in the modern French Jewish intellectual community. While her book may raise many interesting questions about other sectors of French Jewish society, Friedlander keeps herself within the defined boundaries of her topic, leaving future writers to explore the ramifications of the new trends in French Jewish intellectual pursuits which she lays out.

By remaining faithful to the specific nature of her topic, however, Friedlander does not adequately explain how French Jewish intellectuals addressed the cultural changes within French Jewish society after the arrival of the North

African and Middle Eastern Jews in the 1950s and 60s. While she does indicate that, in those decades, hundreds of thousands of North African Jews migrated to France, she does not explore the ramifications of this migration on her thesis. While East European thought may, indeed, be the most influential in terms of current French Jewish intellectual development, Friedlander chooses not to discuss at any length how North African Jews fit into her description. Admittedly, she does suggest that the most important North African Jewish intellectuals who have emerged during this period have adopted the same ideas and ideologies as other French Jewish intellectuals, namely those ideas originating from Eastern Europe and, more especially, Vilna. While this may be largely true, she does not fully explain how the French Jews of North African descent, currently over half the entire French Jewish population, have managed to lose sight of their own very specific cultural background so quickly and to adopt the cultural orientation of the Jews from Eastern Europe. Although Friedlander does show how younger French Jews, who have had no exposure to Eastern European philosophy and ideology, have been affected by their elders, her discussion seems to explain more clearly native French Jews or those whose families have been in France for more than one generation rather than those who have recently migrated to France from North Africa or the Middle East.

The emerging body of literature concerning twentieth century French Jewry has been greatly enhanced by the appearance of *Vilna on the Seine*. While there have been several historical works focusing on French Jewry through World War II, as well as some important demographic and sociological works discussing the various waves of Jewish

immigration to France, no work has previously attempted to explain how World War II and the years following it affected the French Jewish community. Friedlander's examination of the intellectual elite has opened one door to that community. Her combination of biographical information as well as ideological and philosophical exploration about each French Jewish thinker whom she chooses to discuss, presents a fascinating and illuminating picture of a changing French Jewish intellectual community, one which is turning toward traditional answers to many press-

ing modern questions. Through her descriptions, the reader is invited to view the world of these French Jewish thinkers as well as to participate in their philosophical debates. *Vilna on the Seine* thus leaves the reader intrigued about the cast of characters presented in its pages as well as about the ideas which they represent. Friedlander's work is a tremendous contribution to the growing information about French Jewish society as well as the continuation of Jewish intellectual growth both inside and outside of France.

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